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ABSTRACT

This reference guide describes the implementation and use of mixed-age classrooms in Oregon. Those schools that wished to be included provided information on a prepared form. Responses from 94 elementary schools from 23 counties are presented. Each school's profile includes information on school statistics, a description of the program, how the program was implemented, the role of parents, advice, resources available, and a visitor policy. Synthesized and summarized separately at the end of the guide are advice to schools implementing mixed-age programs, guiding principles and best-practices, developmentally appropriate practices, instructional strategies, and types of teacher role and class management. (TM)

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Mixed-age programs

1993-94

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Mixed-Age Programs
1993-1994

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Dear Educator,

This reference guide detailing the implementation and use of mixed-age classrooms in Oregon is the result of a collaborative effort between the Department of Education and Ackerman Elementary School.

Teachers, staff members and principals who are implementing mixed-age classrooms in their schools provided the information for this book. Barbara Fabert, former principal at Ackerman, and department staff compiled the information, with little additional editing or commentary, as it was received from these experts. This is a model of how educators around the state can learn directly from each other.

Thank you to those who gladly shared shared their knowledge in this field to help others. And a special thanks to Barbara Fabert for her effort in gathering the information. This is an example of collaboration resulting in a useful resource tool for you.

Norma Paulus
State Superintendent of Public Instruction

OREGON MIXED-AGE DIRECTORY
INCLUSION FORM

Ackerman Laboratory School and the Oregon Department of Education have compiled a directory of mixed-age programs in the state. If you want to include your school program in this resource directory, please complete the following. This form must be returned to Oregon Department of Education, Public Service Building, 255 Capitol Street NE, Salem, Oregon 97310-0203, by December 9 to be included in the February 1995 directory update. You may use additional paper for your comments. Thank you for your contribution. Please call Anita McClanahan, (503) 378-5585 if you have questions.

Name of School _____

Address _____

Phone _____ Principal _____

School District _____

Number of Students _____ Number of Teachers _____

Number of Administrators _____

Has your school **implemented** a mixed-age program? _____ Yes _____ No

If so, **when** was your mixed-age program implemented?

Briefly describe **why** your school implemented a mixed-age program:

Briefly describe the **process** your school went through to develop your program (players, activities, resources, timeline, etc.):

Briefly **describe** what your mixed-age program looks likes (how are the teachers and students organized, what is the curriculum, assessment, instructional strategies, etc.):

Briefly describe the **role of parents** in your program:

What is your best piece of **advice** for a school embarking on a mixed-age program?

Available **resources** from your school:

Please explain your **visitor** policy:

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Oregon Mixed-Age Directory Inclusion Form

County	*School*
Benton	Bellfountain Elementary Blodgett Elementary Garfield Elementary Lincoln Elementary Wilson Elementary
Clackamas	Ardenwald Elementary Boeckman Creek Primary Cedaroak Park Primary Cottrell Elementary Firwood Elementary Forest Hills Elementary Mt. Pleasant Elementary Uplands Elementary View Acres Elementary Willamette Primary
Clatsop	Lewis & Clark Elementary
Columbia	Lincoln and Mist Elementaries, Washington Grade Quincy-Mayger Elementary
Coos	Bangor Elementary Blossom Gulch Elementary Hillcrest Elementary Powers Elementary
Deschutes	Brothers School Buckingham Elementary
Douglas	Eastwood Elementary Glide Elementary Myrtle Creek Elementary
Jackson	Glenn D. Hale Elementary Hoover Elementary Jewett Elementary Lincoln Elementary
Josephine	Merlin Primary Williams Elementary Wolf Creek Elementary
Klamath	Gilchrist Elementary Keno Elementary Pelican Elementary
Lake	Paisley Elementary

Lane	Adams Elementary
	Camp Creek
	Corridor Alternative
	Elmira Elementary
	Howard Elementary
	Latham Elementary
	London Elementary
	Mohawk Elementary
	Territorial Elementary
	Veneta Elementary
Lincoln	Delake Elementary
Linn	Harris School
	Oak Heights Elementary
	Tennessee Elementary
	Waterloo Primary
Malheur	Jordan Valley Elementary
Marion	Eugene Field School
	Morningside Elementary
	Pratum Elementary
	Schirle Elementary
	Stayton Elementary
	Sumpter Elementary
	Wright Elementary
Multnomah	Boise-Eliot Elementary
	Capitol Hill Elementary
	Clark Elementary
	Clinton Kelly Elementary
	Hollydale Elementary
	Hollyrood Elementary
	Lent Elementary
	Lincoln Park Elementary
	Lynch View Elementary
	Menlo Park Elementary
	Rose City Park Elementary
	Woodstock Elementary
Polk	Monmouth Elementary
	Oak Grove School
	Perrydale Elementary*
Umatilla	Athena Elementary
	Ferndale Elementary
	Helix Elementary
	Ukiah Elementary
Union	Ackerman Lab School
	Grande Ronde Child Center
Wasco	Joseph G. Wilson Elementary
	Mosier Elementary

Washington

Greenway Elementary
Groner Elementary
Lenox Elementary
Rock Creek Elementary

Yamhill

Columbus Elementary
Edwards Elementary
Grand Ronde Elementary
Wascher Elementary

Advice to Schools Implementing Mixed-Age Programs

Teacher Resource

Index of Programs by County

BENTON COUNTY

Bellfountain Elementary
25398 Dawson
Monroe, OR 97456-9750
(503) 424-3225
District: Bellfountain

Principal: Nelson O'Mealey
School Size:
61 students
5 teachers
1 principal

Program Implemented: Many years ago
Program Descriptors:
- K-8

It was necessary for Bellfountain to implement a mixed-age program many years ago because it is a small school with a small enrollment. The program consists of one class of first-second, one class of third-It fourth, one class of fifth-sixth, and one class of seventh-eighth. Visitors are welcome at any time.

Blodgett Elementary
PO Box 27
Old Castle Highway 20
Blodgett, OR 97326
(503) 453-4101
District: Philomath

Principal: Rod Harvey
School Size:
42 students
2 teachers
No principal on location

Program Implemented: Years Ago
Program Descriptors:
- Two-room School
- Portfolios
- Parent Volunteers

Blodgett is a two-room school which implemented mixed-age grouping years ago out of necessity. The school continues the program not only because of limited space, but because of benefits to students. The teachers have taken courses and visited other schools with mixed-age programs. One room has first-second and the other room has third-fourth. Students are grouped by ability for reading and math in first-second at times. Stations are used as well as whole group instruction. The third-fourth class is not grouped by ability for reading, and seldom for math unless students need assistance in a particular area.

Students read trade books and library books. Individual conferences are held for literature discussions, as well as whole group and small groups. Assessment includes portfolios, observations, conferencing and testing. There are many parent volunteers. Parents read with the students, conference, share activities, and assist with clerical tasks, playground supervision and fundraising.

Visitors are very welcome, but need to contact the school in advance. Parents are welcome anytime.

Garfield Elementary
1205 NW Garfield Avenue
Corvallis, OR 97330-2057
(503) 757-5941
District: Corvallis

Principal: Gloria Gibbs
School Size:
402 students
18 teachers
1 principal

Program Implemented: September, 1993
Program Descriptors:
- Whole language
- Integrated, Thematic & Developmental Curriculum
- Primary Program & Upper Elementary
- Cooperative Learning
- School Development Committee

Corvallis School District had moved to a developmentally appropriate curriculum. Garfield implemented a mixed-age primary in order to even out class sizes, have students with the same teacher for two years, and benefit from the six primary teachers working together as a planning team. At the upper elementary level, Garfield moved to mixed-age for philosophical reasons and to balance class sizes. Garfield had one or two "combination" classes over the years. As other teachers realized the advantages of these classes, more teachers were interested in mixed-age grouping. The "big change" came in 1993-94, when all the primary grades and a majority of the upper elementary grades became mixed-age. The third grades are kept as one level and considered a "transition" year.

Six, seven and eight year olds comprise the primary program, which is based on integrated, thematic and developmental curriculum. The primary program also incorporates cooperative learning, centers, manipulative-based math, inquiry method science, whole language and the writing process. Three mixed-age upper elementary classrooms are in a "pod" configuration in three portable classrooms. Students are their classroom for two years. A conceptual, thematic approach is used with teachers planning together. Students are rotated among the classrooms for some topics. Buddy classes with the primary students also exist.

Parents in the primary program are volunteers in the classrooms. Parent representatives are on the School Development Committee. Parents are given the option of having their children remain with the same teacher for two years and are surveyed about their feelings about mixed-age grouping after a year at each level. In the upper elementary, parents provide assistance, information, resources, and small group instruction. Parents are welcome to visit classrooms at any time.

Classroom visitations, teacher presentations, and a professional library are available at the primary level. Visitors need to make arrangements with the teacher in advance and need to check in at the office to get a name tag.

Lincoln Elementary
110 SE Alexander Avenue
Corvallis, OR 97333-1999
(503) 757-5955
District: Corvallis

Principal: Dan Hays
School Size:
400 students
14 teachers
1 principal

Program Implemented: 1993-94
Program Descriptors:

- DAP
- Portfolios
- Conferencing
- Narratives
- Emergent Curriculum
- Integrated & Thematic Instruction
- Site Council
- Parents as Partners

Lincoln implemented a mixed-age program in order to deal with issues surrounding poverty. All staff and parents were involved with the transition which occurred after one year of study and two years of choice. The program is a mix of two and three age groups per class. Developmentally appropriate practices, portfolios, conferencing, narratives, emergent curriculum, and integrated and thematic instruction are incorporated into the program.

Parents are partners and serve on Lincoln's Site Council. Teachers are available to do inservice activities. Visitors are welcome, but need to call for an appointment as there is one visitation period per week.

Wilson Elementary
2701 NW Satinwood
Corvallis, OR 97330
(503) 757-5987
District: Corvallis

Principal: Jim Schweigert
School Size:
400 students
17.6 teachers
1 principal

Program Implemented: Fall, 1992
Program Descriptors:

- Primary Level
- Literature-based Reading
- Whole Language
- Project Work
- Design Technology
- Inquiry Method
- Process Writing
- Daily Parent Newsletter

Wilson Elementary felt there was a need for more efficient, flexible grouping. Also, teachers requested a mixed-age program. The school is in the initial phases of change with the goal of not defining mixed-age by the number of years students are in the program, but by the students' needs. Wilson jumped into the program in the fall of 1992 with one class and no special preparation. In fact, it was a last-minute decision in the fall. The teacher sent a letter to parents and to students before school started, met with parents in the early fall and kept ongoing communication with daily newsletters. Parents were welcomed at all times. In the spring of 1993, two teachers and instructional facilitators met with interested parents to describe mixed-age grouping Parents could request the mixed-age classrooms or single-grade classrooms. The primary teachers had a committee during the first year to study mixed-age programs through research and visitations. Discussions centered around the "comfort levels" of individual teachers with mixed-age grouping. Teachers had the option of teaching in the program. There are three primary classes of twenty-nine to thirty students. Students were assigned to the classes on the basis of parent requests. Each class reflects the uniqueness of the class members and the teacher. The program includes: project work, students as teachers-learners, whole language, literature-based reading, manipulative math, design technology, inquiry method, and process writing.

Parents are supportive and enthusiastic. Through daily newsletters, parents are being educated about the program and know what is happening, but are happy to be involved from home. Some parents volunteer in the program on a regular basis, but most volunteer for special events and field trips.

For teachers, mixed-age organization requires constant learning by the teacher-facilitators, flexibility, creativity, comfort with change, and trust in children's natural desire and need to learn. Time to share and plan with teachers is important.

Wilson has the following resources to share: math manipulatives, research, inservice activities, and literature materials for whole language. Visitors are welcome.

CLACKAMAS COUNTY

Ardenwald Elementary
8950 SE 36th
Milwaukie, OR 97222-5602
(503) 653-3656
District: North Clackamas

Principal: Sally Leet
School Size:
325 students
12 teachers
1 principal

Program Implemented: 1992
Program Descriptors:
- Mixed-age Reading
- Parent Volunteers

Ardenwald implemented a mixed-age program for a number of reasons. Some of the teachers wanted mixed-age classes because of the research supporting the concept. A class on mixed-age grouping was established and a number of teachers realized the benefits of having the same students for a second year. Two years ago, the principal explored the idea of mixed-age grouping for reading for all students in second through sixth grades. The concept was implemented for a short time each day through a mixed-age reading class period. Student reading scores have improved and the teachers see the results of combined age levels working cooperatively.

Ardenwald then moved a step further to implement seven mixed-age groupings in their regular day. Research was shared, there were staff meetings devoted to discussions on mixed-age grouping, a class was brought to the school by Portland State University, teachers attended workshops and visited schools, and a parent meeting was held to describe the benefits of mixed-age grouping. Most of the teachers involved in the program want to keep their classes again next year. This will mean the third consecutive year that some students will have the same teacher.

The regular mixed-age classes are split randomly with approximately half of each grade level. The program consists of: one first-second class, two second-third classes, two third-fourth classes, and two fifth-sixth classes. The reading mixed-age grouping has students together who span three years.

Parents act as volunteers when needed and are excited about the mixed-age groupings. Parents request mixed-age classes and want their children with the same teacher for at least two years.

Staff are available as resources to visit other schools implementing similar programs. Ardenwald's visitor policy is open.

Boeckman Creek Primary
6700 Wilsonville Road
Wilsonville, OR 97070-0622
(503) 682-4579
District: West Linn-Wilsonville

Principal: Nancy Hays
School Size:
455 students
18 teachers
1 principal

Program Implemented: 1990
Program Descriptors:
- DAP
- Integrated Curriculum
- Student-Centered Assessment

Boeckman Creek Primary implemented mixed-age grouping in order to best meet children's needs by providing learning in developmentally appropriate ways. From 1991-93, Boeckman worked with a non-graded primary grant from the Oregon Department of Education. During the same years, they worked with The Oregon Network Consortium Grant from the U.S. Department of Education. The school is now working with The Oregon Network Consortium at the state level through Lane County ESD.

The kindergartens and first grades share common learning centers. The mixed-age classes focus on integrated curriculum, divergent teaching strategies, and student-centered assessment and conferencing. Parents are urged to be involved in classrooms and activities, and are integral to the success of the program.

Visitors are welcome, but are requested to arrange their visits on designated visitor days. A book of materials is available to visitors for $5.

The following pages are documents from Boeckman's program.

HOW DID MULTI-AGED CLASSROOMS HAPPEN AT BOECKMAN CREEK SCHOOL?

ENROLLMENT

It was a given that upon opening in fall, 1991 there would be some multi-age classrooms.

RESEARCH

Students in multi-age groups:

- have higher self esteem
- perform as well or better academically

INVOLVEMENT & IMPLEMENTATION

Parent meetings began up to a year before school started.

Staff meetings started in May, 1990 and continued throughout the summer with credit class for staff.

Staff was involved in the decision making process and made the decision to have multi-aged classrooms in July after much research and thought.

Curriculum Design began to include thematic-integrated instruction, flex scheduling in the library, specialist involvement in integration of instruction, common planning times.

ONGOING ASSESSMENT

School Study Team formed in November 1990. Parents, teachers, and administrators on the team met monthly to assess the school program.

Surveyed attitudes of students, parents, and staff.

Washington State University conducted school climate study in fall and spring 1990-1991.

BOECKMAN CREEK
THE BEGINNING

Planning for the opening of Boeckman Creek began in the spring of 1989 when the Educational Specifications Committee began meeting with Dull Olson Weeks, Architects. The committee was composed of a teacher from each primary school, the assistant superintendent and the appointed principal, Nancy Hays.

The Ed Specs committee began talking about the new school in terms of describing the optimum setting for maximum student learning. The goals were to combine flexibility for the program with a welcoming, nurturing environment for children. Groups of four classrooms arranged around central "commons" areas would offer increased instructional and activity interaction. Movable walls could be used to divide teaching stations in classroom areas or be relocated to provide larger group activities. A library that could be utilized as a teaching station, indirect lighting utilized in large areas to reduce glare, and clerestory windows to provide natural light to the interior supported the Ed Specs goals.

Ground breaking occurred in the fall of 1989. Once the building construction began, so did the process of naming the building and identifying the attendance area. Both processes were completed by the middle of the 1989-90 school year.

Meetings with parents began in the fall of 1989, first with the principal and the director of school improvement. By April of 1990, most of the staff had been hired and they joined in the community meetings.

The staff met for a weekend retreat at Seaside in late May 1990. The retreat began an intensive period of staff development for the teachers, about half of whom had transferred from within the district and half from outside the district.

Boeckman Creek opened its doors to 255 students on September 4, 1990, without the gym, cafeteria, and part of the playground equipment. By November 1, the school was completed and dedicated.

The guiding principles developed at the Seaside retreat became the foundation for building programs and coalitions during the school year.

OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES

We believe that people learn for life and that there is diversity in this process.

We believe that a child centered school promotes a sense of power, freedom and success for everyone in it.

We believe there is a direct correlation between high self-esteem and intrinsically motivated learning: both are equally important.

We believe in modeling and teaching democratic values such as cooperation, respect, responsibility and justice.

We believe quality education is a partnership between students, staff, parents, and community.

BOECKMAN CREEK SCHOOL'S PARADIGM SHIFT

FROM	TO
Single-Graded Classrooms	**Non-Graded Classrooms**
Individual Subjects	**Integrated/Thematic Instruction** • Whole Language • Learning Centers • Webbing Activities
Cognitive Curriculum	**Cognitive, Physical, Emotional and Social Curriculum**
Reactive Discipline Practices • Punishment Model	**Proactive Discipline Practices** • Teaching Model • Positive Guidance Techniques • The Ladder of Success
Pencil and Paper	**Word Processing** • Design Technology • Publishing House • Multi-media Technology
Competitive Learning	**Cooperative Learning** • Cross-age tutoring • One-to-one tutoring • Group work • Buddy classes
Curriculum Centered Model • Students molded to curriculum • Convergent teaching strategies	**Child Centered Model** • Curriculum molded to students • Divergent teaching strategies • FLEX scheduling with specialists
The 3 R's • Reading, 'Riting, 'Rithmetic	**The 5 C's** • Critical Thinking Skills • Communication Skills • Coping Skills • Creative Skills-enrichment • Cooperation Skills
Remediation • Pull-out programs for students with special needs	**Merge** • Specialists come to students in their own classrooms • Before and after school enrichment classes
Hands Off—Passive Learning • Quiet, in desk	**Hands On—Active Learning** • Developmentally Appropriate Practices • BSCS Science Curriculum
Teacher Directed Instruction • Teacher selected materials • Teacher rules • Textbooks, Worksheets, Dittos	**Teacher Facilitated Instruction** • Student, teacher and parent selected materials • Classroom rules • Trade books, multi-media, newspapers • Child-initiated activities

Math Algorithms	**Total Math Program** • Computation with manipulatives • Problem solving • Mental math
K-5 Education	**Life-Long Learning Modeled** • Teacher as researcher involved in Action Research Projects • Parent lending library
Report Cards/Grades	**Developmental Progress Reports** • Portfolios • Parent, student and teacher conferences • Checklists
Retention	**Students Progress at Own Rates**
Memorization • Information memorized	**Understanding** • Exploration • Discovery • Experimentation • Reasoning • Problem solving • Higher level thinking skills
Tracking	**Flexible Skill Grouping**
Enrichment for Gifted Child	**Enrichment for All**
Parents Leave Education to Teachers	**Parents As Partners In Education** • Parent volunteers in classrooms • Parents teaching enrichment classes
Paradigm Paralysis	**Paradigm Pioneers**

STAFF DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING

We have many opportunities to work and learn together as a staff. The support of our district, funding from grants, and our own commitment to growing and learning along with our students have offered needed support.

Following is a brief summary of the ways in which we plan and learn together:

1. Weekly Staff Meetings—Our staff has committed to shifting the agendas of our traditional meetings away from operational issues and to the direction of staff development. The subjects of our meetings this year have been assessment and reporting practices including topics such as assessment portfolios, anecdotal observation strategies, student self-assessment, student-led conferences, narrative reporting, and student goal setting. We communicate operational information through weekly staff bulletins and our computerized mail system. If there are operational issues that need discussion, we hold a short meeting in the morning.

2. Weekly team planning—Our teams meet by grade level (K/1, 2/3,4/5) on a weekly basis. At these meetings teachers do common planning and share new ideas and information. Our specialists often join in these meetings.

3. Enrichment Substitute/Planning Days—We have used funding provided by a grant for the past few years to buy time for teams to plan and improve instructional strategies. Six times during the year grade level teams have a half day work session. This time is usually spent partially on long term planning and partially on the development and improvement of instructional strategies. The agendas for these work sessions are determined by each team.

   We hire a group of substitute teachers to come and work with the children during this teacher release time. The substitutes commit to the six planning sessions during the year and develop their own lesson plans. They use the same plans for each of the six planning sessions throughout the year. We call our group of substitutes "Enrichment Substitutes" and support them in planning their own curriculum around a common theme. This is our third year of using this staff development system. Each year the theme for our Enrichment Days has changed as described below:

   Year 1—Literature was our focus. Each substitute chose a piece of children's literature and developed a half day of plans at each of our three grade levels.

   Year 2—Each substitute chose an author of children's literature and developed their plans around the works of the author.

   Year 3—We have chosen an art literacy theme for our enrichment program this year. Each substitute teacher has chosen an artist to share with children.

   The enrichment substitutes write a letter for each child to take home. This letter explains the activities in which their child has engaged on that particular day.

4. Book Study Group—In our second year of operation we met together to discuss chapters of the book Invitations, written by Reggie Routman. Each member of our staff received a copy of the book and a specific chapter was designated as the topic of discussion. This was a wonderful way for our staff to develop a common language and share new and old ideas.

5. The other component of our staff development consists of the many conferences and classes we attend. Our district provides generous funding toward our continued education.

Cedaroak Park Primary
4515 Cedaroak Drive
West Linn, OR 97068
(503) 657-8721
District: West Linn-Wilsonville

Principal: Charlotte Morris
School Size:
500 students
27 teachers
1 principal

Program Implemented: 1990
Program Descriptors:

- Developmentally Appropriate Practices
- Integrated Literature-based Curriculum
- Process Writing
- Authentic Assessments
- Site Council
- Community Tutor Program
- Prevention/Interventions Plan for At-risk Students

Cedaroak Park is a suburban K-5 school that emphasizes developmentally appropriate practices in both mixed-age and single-graded classes. Cedaroak Park is favorably viewed by its constituents as a welcoming primary school with high expectations of students, quality staff and programs, and personalized educational opportunities for every student.

Highlights of Cedaroak's school improvement journey include:

- an articulated K-5 curriculum framework built around concepts, topics, and CIM outcomes.
- mixed-age communities emphasizing activities that support leadership, service, and cross-age projects.
- integrated project work and student performances that demonstrate high level learning.
- authentic assessment practices such as self-reflections, retellings, portfolios, and student involved conferences.

Staff are highly committed to their own professional growth. Data from surveys, tests, portfolios, and pilot programs are used to monitor progress and direct change that will move the school toward meeting its desired goals. The staff continually research and implement effective instructional practices while modeling collaboration, problem solving, and life-long learning.

CEDAROAK PARK SCHOOL
A JOURNEY TO RESTRUCTURING

A restructuring process for Cedaroak Park School began in the spring of 1990. At that time, the entire staff met with the new principal and new instructional coordinator. We created a dream and envisioned a child-centered school where:

- instruction was active and age-appropriate
- curriculum was integrated and meaningful
- assessment was performance-based and built into the curriculum and instruction in the classroom
- the teacher was an action researcher and each student a self-directed learner
- the school was a partner rich with the diversity of a strong, involved, and supportive community.

The staff adopted the following at that time:

Mission Statement: "Lifelong Learning for a Better World"

Guiding Belief Statements

- We believe that we are all learners in our ever-changing world.
- We believe that emphasis on the process of learning promotes a child's success in learning
- We believe it is our responsibility to foster each student's self esteem.

- We believe that we have the responsibility to promote value and respect for others
- We believe that as responsible citizens it is important for all members of the school community to be collaborative, flexible, and willing to communicate with each other.
- We believe in a commitment to better our community and our world through collaborative problem-solving and creative thinking.

These beliefs will guide our actions so that our children will achieve success in an atmosphere that is nurturing, joyful, challenging and aesthetically pleasing.

Motto: "Challenging Our Potential"

Major activities over the next few years as we continued our journey were as follows:

1990-91

- Staff meetings on educational reform
- Focus on change as a continuous process
- A pilot mixed-age class (3-4)
- Discussions with staff and parents on mixed-age classrooms
- Development of a two-year curriculum cycle

1991-92

- Implementation of two-year curriculum model/focus on instruction
- Implementation of mixed-age classes/developmentally appropriate practices
- Visitations for classroom teachers—Oregon and/or British Columbia
- Related Report pilot for grade 3-4

1992-93

- Focus on instruction and learning as a process/project approach
- Continuation of two-year curriculum
- Investigation into performance demonstrations and outcomes with Oregon Department of Education, Sue Carter and Lucinda Welch
- Site council planning with Ruth Stiehl from Oregon Department of Education
- Staff discussions and investigations into the implications of the CIM and CAM model upon elementary education
- Planning for additional mixed-age opportunities within our school organization
- Visitors to Cedaroak to share our learnings

1993-94

- Develop CIM benchmarks for grades 3 and 5
- Develop performance tasks and rubrics for benchmarks
- Implement mixed-age communities
- Continued development of portfolios and student-led spring conferences
- Continuation of Progress Report pilot for grades 3-4
- Site Council Implementation
- Develop documentation of restructuring process to share with visitors to our school

Our dream in 1990 is now becoming a reality. We view ourselves as a school community which set a vision to follow, established guiding principles, moved toward change that was in keeping with our beliefs, and are continuing to mold our school to become a model for 21st century schools. House Bill 3565 has enhanced these efforts in that we have folded in those components as a part of our change process and utilized the expertise of Oregon Department of Education personnel. Our school has received an implementation restructuring grant for winter, 1994–spring, 1995. This grant will enable us to further staff development efforts, establish curriculum benchmarks, and develop authentic assessments of those benchmarks at a time when local funding is limited.

CEDAROAK PARK SCHOOL
STAFF PRACTICES

As we have moved to restructuring, we have studied and reflected upon educational practices, new and old. We have tried to build upon past successful practices as we study research and look to new or different strategies for providing the best for our students. The following chart shows samples of our expanded thinking.

We Selected These Approaches	*And Added These Approaches*
Instruction As:	
Teacher directed	Student Initiated
Whole group	Flexible Groups, Individuals
	Collaborative groups
Individual learning	Do, think, reflect—active
Listen/read—passive	Child-centered
Adult oriented	Discovering
Remembering	
Curriculum As:	
Teacher choice	Student choice
Teacher ownership	Student ownership
Books per subject area	Variety of materials/resources
	Technology
Books/paper/pencil	Student focus
Grade level focus	Whole child focus
Narrow intellectual focus	Enrichment for all
Enrichment/help for a few	
Assessment As:	
Goals	Outcomes
Teacher as evaluator	Student as evaluator
Subjective grades	Rubrics/continuums
Paper/pencil	Performances/projects
Report card	Profiles/portfolios
Assessment as 3 Ps: Performance, Projects, Portfolios	

Overlay Efforts

- CIM Core application and foundation skills embedded in an articulated K-5th grade curriculum framework.
- Performance tasks created which are connected to outcomes and benchmarks that demonstrate quality student learning
- Create reporting instruments and procedures that reflect student learning and restructured curriculum
- Community and businesses involved in learning, assessments, and the celebration of student learning.
- Informed staff, students, parents, community and businesses.

Cottrell Elementary
36225 SE Proctor Road
Boring, OR 97009-9719
(503) 668-5521
District: Cottrell

Principal: Joanne Yatvin
School Size:
240 students
14 teachers
1 principal

Program Implemented: 1989
Program Descriptors:
- Primary Committee
- Site Committee

As a school with only one class per grade level, Cottrell had no flexibility for placement of students and no opportunities for teachers to plan together. This prompted Cottrell to begin mixed-age groupings and discover many other advantages of a mixed-age program as well. The staff decided what they wanted to do in the fall of 1988. Parent informational meetings were held during the spring of 1989 and newsletters were distributed. The program was implemented in grades first-fifth in the fall of 1989. The faculty planned for the K-2 program during the summer of 1992, and the program was implemented in three classrooms the following fall.

Parents serve on the mixed-age primary committee and on the Site Council. All parents are surveyed yearly about their satisfaction with the program.

A two-page brochure describing the program is available and visitors are welcome by appointment.

Firwood Elementary
42900 SE Trubel Road
Sandy, OR 97055
(503) 668-8005
District: Sandy

Principal: Teri Prochaska
School Size:
515 students
20 teachers
1 principal

Program Implemented: 1992
Program Descriptors:
- Project Approach
- Learning Centers
- Parent Involvement

Firwood's teachers implemented a mixed-age program out of a desire to meet the educational, social, and emotional needs of the students. Three teachers (kindergarten, first and second) planned with the principal and the inclusion specialist for a year, attended various workshops, took classes, visited schools, and met during the summer to complete plans. During the first year of implementation, the teachers participated in a mixed-age study group through Portland State University. The program consists of: two kindergarten-second classes, three first-second classes, and two second-third classes. These classes use learning centers and the project approach with direct instruction. Parents are an integral part of the program and work in the centers with students.

Visitors are welcome, but need to call the principal with a two week advance notice.

Forest Hills Elementary
1133 SW Andrews Road
Lake Oswego, OR 97034
(503) 635-0350
District: Lake Oswego

Principal: Mollie Brown
School Size:
408 students
15 teachers
1 principal

Program Implemented: 1991-92

Program Descriptor:
- Two-year Curriculum Cycle

A philosophical shift made mixed-age classes more acceptable at Forest Hills and balanced class sizes. By implementing mixed-age grouping, the school used their resources more effectively and took advantage of the climate gains supported by the research on mixed-age grouping. In 1991-92, three teachers were needed to try some innovation. The principal invited teachers to pilot three mixed-age classrooms. The following year, more study and discussion resulted in five mixed-age classrooms. In 1993-94, nine mixed-age classrooms consisted of first-second, third-fourth and fifth-sixth, with two year curriculum cycles for science and social studies. Parents were initially worried, but Forest Hills convinced them that mixed-age grouping works.

Visitors are welcome to chat with teachers and parents, but arrangements need to be made ahead of time. The visitation includes time with the principal and an opportunity to wander through the classrooms for thirty minutes to an hour.

Mt. Pleasant Elementary
1232 Linn Avenue
Oregon City, OR 97045-0032
(503) 657-2454
District: Oregon City

Principal: Jani Shea
School Size:
540 students
17 teachers
1 principal

Program Implemented: 1987
Program Descriptors:
- DAP
- Parents as Partners

Mt. Pleasant began the current phase of mixed-age groupings in 1987 as a "school within a school" to address the needs of the district's at-risk students. The mixed-age program was continued with various refinements. During 1987-88, the district at-risk coordinator, one teacher, one full-time aide, and community resources implemented the program with at-risk fourth, fifth, and sixth graders. The following year two full-time teachers, one full-time aide and the district coordinator worked with at-risk third-sixth graders. At-risk second graders were added during 1989-90. The same staff worked with a heterogeneous group of first, second and third graders during 1990-91, and with first and second graders during 1991-92. Since 1992, there have been four mixed-age first-second classes, one third-fourth class, and one fifth-sixth class. The students are with their teachers for more than one year. The mixed-age primary classes use a teaming approach with a model that includes an activities room and a quiet room. Developmentally appropriate activities are the top priority for the primary.

Parents are partners in their children's education and volunteer in their classrooms. Parents have made presentations to the public about Mt. Pleasant's process to develop mixed-age programs.

Mt. Pleasant has developed several curriculum components for integrating goals at the primary level. They also have a video describing the 1990-91 program.

Because of an increase in visitors in 1990-91, the school no longer takes visitors. However, two of the teachers are available to do presentations and teach graduate courses at Portland State; i.e., Rhonda Herring and Ruth Vandercook.

Uplands Elementary
2055 SW Wembley Park Road
Lake Oswego, OR 97034
(503) 635-0366
District: Lake Oswego

Principal: Katy McCarney
School Size:
522 students
30 teachers
1 principal

Program Implemented: Fall, 1992

Program Descriptors:

- School Advisory Committee
- Site Council
- Parent Volunteers
- Curriculum Cycles

Uplands Elementary's staff and School Advisory Committee reviewed the research and made school visitations before deciding to move to mixed-age groupings for philosophical reasons. The change process for the school included an impetus for change, staff development activities, parent education, curriculum, and implementation. The following page describes the web of the change process. The mixed-age program includes kindergarten, first-second, third-fourth, and fifth-sixth. There was one single mixed-age class at each level during the first year of implementation. Now all the classes are mixed-aged. Teachers use a wide variety of instructional and assessment strategies to promote success for all individual students and are on a two-year curriculum cycle.

Parents are very actively involved in the school through the School Advisory Committee, Site Council and Parent-Teacher Organizations. Many parents volunteer in the school with Art Literacy, Writers Workshop, reading contracts, individual spelling programs, Family Science, Family Math and other programs.

Uplands will share, upon request, an information packet, parent letters, articles and research synthesis. Visitors are welcome and visitations should be scheduled through the principal.

UPLANDS ELEMENTARY
MIXED-AGE GROUPING

Teaching children of different ages and abilities together, usually with a 2-4 year age span, in a single setting for all or part of the day, with a focus on teaching skills and concepts in an integrated fashion.

What is continuous process?

Continuous process occurs when a learner progresses according to his or her academic, social, emotional, physical and aesthetic development regardless of age or number of years at school.

This progress is not determined by the pace of a peer group or the month of the school year, but rather by the individual in a supportive environment.

Rationale

- Recognizes the reality of how children learn
- Allows time for optimum, natural and relevant growth
- Promotes self-esteem and encourages success
- Challenges without frustration
- Builds on cooperative teaching and learning
- Accommodates a variety of teaching strategies which will better meet children's individual learning styles
- Creates enthusiasm, maintains interest and minimizes boredom for both children and teachers
- Emphasizes what has been learned
- Greater focus of what each child can do
- Meets the unique needs of all children

What are developmentally appropriate practices?

Developmentally Appropriate Practices (DAP) is a term used to refer to curriculum organization and instructional strategies that are appropriate for the age and individual development of each student. This child-centered, activity-oriented approach is appropriate in any single-age or mixed-age classroom configuration.

Other elements include:

- Curriculum designed to promote maximum student involvement in integrated learning that meets the students' developmental needs
- Teacher observation of student progress as a primary focus of assessment
- Children provided a nurturing and challenging environment that maximizes ease of transitions
- Guidance for the social and emotional development of students emphasized
- Family involvement in the educational process
- Flexible classroom organization responsive to the needs of children within the school community
- Curriculum designed to help children learn how to learn

If developmentally appropriate practices are used, what is the balance between child-centered versus curriculum-centered learning?

Developmentally Appropriate Practices is an approach to teaching that is based on what is now known about how children learn and grow and what they are capable of learning. This practice does not suggest curriculum-centered over a child-centered approach, but rather promotes a balanced approach. Teachers must be able to use and follow the broad outlines for the various curricula (using the state's Essential Learning Skills and Common Curriculum Goals, along with the district's goals) as the base or blueprint for the instructional decisions they make. Children's interests, questions and developmental progress also help drive the design for the learning activities. Teachers must make the decision regarding instructional methods, curriculum design and grouping practices. Curriculum guidelines which emphasize broad learner outcomes and articulate district guidelines assure that students are introduced to the necessary

skills and concepts. This can be done in a context that makes meaningful connections between subjects. Ongoing assessment of children's progress is used to adjust curriculum for individual needs and to evaluate program effectiveness.

What are advantages of mixed-age/multi-graded groupings?

Research on mixed-age instruction provides a solid basis and rationale for considering multi-grade approaches to instruction in addition to the traditional single-age classroom. Studies show that there is little or no difference in achievement between single or multi-graded classrooms. However, in the areas of student emotional and social growth, students in multi-grade or mixed-age classrooms outperform their single-grade counterparts on nearly every measure.

Given the body of knowledge available today, researchers who studied the effects of mixed-age grouping to students' social/emotional growth generally report these results:

- Students in mixed-age settings appear to have significantly higher self-concept scores than students in single grades. (Junell, 1970; Schrankler, 1976; Milburn, 1981)
- Students tend to have more of a feeling of belonging. (Sherman, 1984; Chace, 1961; Mycock, 1966)
- Students have improved attitudes toward school and learning. (Schroeder & Nott, 1974; Schrankler, 1976; Milburn, 1981; Junell, 1970; Pratt & Treacy, 1986)
- Mixed-age settings provide children with more leadership opportunities. (French, Waas, Stright, Baker, 1986; Stright & French, 1988)
- There appears to be more teaching, sharing, explaining and help given between children. (French, 1984; Brody, Stoneman, MacKinnon, 1982)
- Self-regulation improves for some children with impulse control difficulties because they are given the opportunity to help and monitor younger age groups. (Louger & Graziano, 1986)
- Younger children in the mixed-age classroom are much more likely to engage in more complex play (Howes & Farver, 1987)
- Younger children appear to benefit from the attention of older students, enhancing their motivation and self-confidence. (Kim, 1990)
- Mixed-age groups enhance older children's responsibility. (Grazian, French, Brownell & Hartup, 1976)

Advocates who have worked with mixed-age groupings in their schools report the following strengths in the classroom:

- it invites cooperation
- it appears to minimize competitive pressures on children
- discipline problems are often substantially reduced
- it allows for greater flexibility in instructional grouping
- promotes improved student relations
- it creates a context for meeting the developmental and social needs of students
- when teachers spend more than one year with a group of students, it allows for greater stability and the development of meaningful, long-term relationships

Are other schools implementing mixed-age grouping?

The Oregon Educational Act for the 21st Century (House Bill 3565) requires the state and school districts to study the non-graded system as a means of grouping children to meet their needs. Schools throughout the United States are exploring mixed-age groupings and developmentally appropriate practices as restructuring plans are being made to improve instruction and make schools more effective. Flexible grouping and de-emphasizing grade levels are central themes of the most current thinking about elementary education. Many schools throughout Oregon are currently studying mixed-age grouping and developmentally appropriate practices. Uplands has been having visitors from schools across the state who are interested in the strategies we are implementing.

Is a mixed-age class the same as a split class?

No. Split classrooms are based on more traditional teaching of two different curricula to different grade levels within a classroom. The assumption is that a teacher would teach one grade level, then the other, then go back to the first one, etc. Usually a smaller group of independent workers is chosen for this type of classroom. In a mixed-age classroom, the group is balanced for all types of children. A teacher does not teach completely separate curriculum, and students are not usually taught by grade level designation. There is not necessarily a smaller number of students in these classes, although combining grade levels allows us to blend numbers of students per classroom more equitably. The goal is to teach each child at his/her ability and interest level.

What staff development is the Uplands staff participating in for support through the restructuring?

Our staff is highly committed to learning about grouping, assessment, teaching strategies, and specific issues related to mixed-age grouping. Over the past couple of years, staff members have taken multiple classes in teaching literacy, developmentally appropriate practices, assessment, and educational design. Most of our staff have participated together in a summer class and year-long class to learn instructional and assessment strategies. Teachers have made visitations to other schools using mixed-age grouping, and have attended numerous conferences and workshops. Energizing dialogue has been constantly taking place within our staff during the past year about these topics, and it will continue.

Can the needs of high/low ability children be met in mixed-age grouping?

Mixed-age grouping can provide each student with instruction that is appropriate to meet his or her intellectual, emotional, social and physical needs. The wider the range of competencies in a mixed-age group, the greater the opportunities for students to develop learning relationships with others who match, complement, or supplement their own needs.

To be successful at meeting the needs of different ability, children in single-age or mixed-age groupings, certain practices must be utilized: 1)continuous progress; 2)flexible grouping within a classroom; 3) classroom groupings that provide for an optimal range of cognitive development; and 4) a wide range of instructional strategies. At Uplands, we feel that we are doing a better job of meeting individual needs of children than ever before. This takes careful monitoring of each child's progress and using different strategies with different children.

This sounds great for the younger students, but what about the older ones? Do they get the education they need, or are they busy tutoring the younger students?

While we emphasize cooperation among our students, we do not ask older students in a class to spend their days working on skills they have already mastered in order to help younger students. Research available to us tells us that both younger and older students in mixed-age classes perform comparably to their peers in single-grade classrooms on standardized academic testing. A good teacher meets the needs of all students in any setting. This does not change in a mixed-age class. In fact, removing "grade level expectations" often helps us better meet individual needs of children. It removes the grade level ceiling of expectations. If we implement this program correctly, we give more opportunities for children to be challenged.

Is it detrimental for lower ability students' self-esteem to be grouped with younger students who are more successful?

By grouping children across a wider span of ages and performances, the norm is set that there are going to be lots of differences among children. The least successful reader still knows that he is not reading with as much facility as others, but in every case the message from adults and other children will be that different kids learn different things at different times. Being different is OK in our school. What is essential is that we focus on students' strengths and learning styles while continuing to build skills.

Do children slip through the cracks?

This is a question that we always need to ask about individual children in any classroom. We have to look at children more individually under mixed-age grouping. It is imperative that we make individual assessments about children and plan for their individual needs accordingly.

How are the needs of a gifted child addressed in mixed-age grouping?

It is our view that the needs of gifted children are better met using this grouping strategy. Students have opportunities for continuous progress and academic acceleration. Specifically, this allows for the child who is academically advanced in one are to move far ahead, while receiving the benefit of learning opportunities in some other areas that are more in line with the regular grade level. It also helps us as adults acknowledge the "giftedness" within each child.

Doesn't mixed-age grouping socially isolate my child? What if he or she has no friends in class?

We are implementing this program because research and practicing teachers in mixed-age settings tell us that mixed-age grouping has positive social results for students. Studies have shown that students have more of a feeling of belonging, more leadership opportunities, enhanced self-esteem, and more opportunities for sharing and helping. One of the things that we all have to realize is that students have significant friendships outside of their own age/grade level, just as we do as adults. In converting from traditional single-grade classes to mixed-age classes, there is a transition for both children and adults in being comfortable with the idea that friendship can cross age spans.

Are siblings placed in the same class?

We do not make this type of placement without conferring with parents. We will generally place siblings with different teachers, although there might be a situation where this would be beneficial to the children. This type of decision is made on an individual basis.

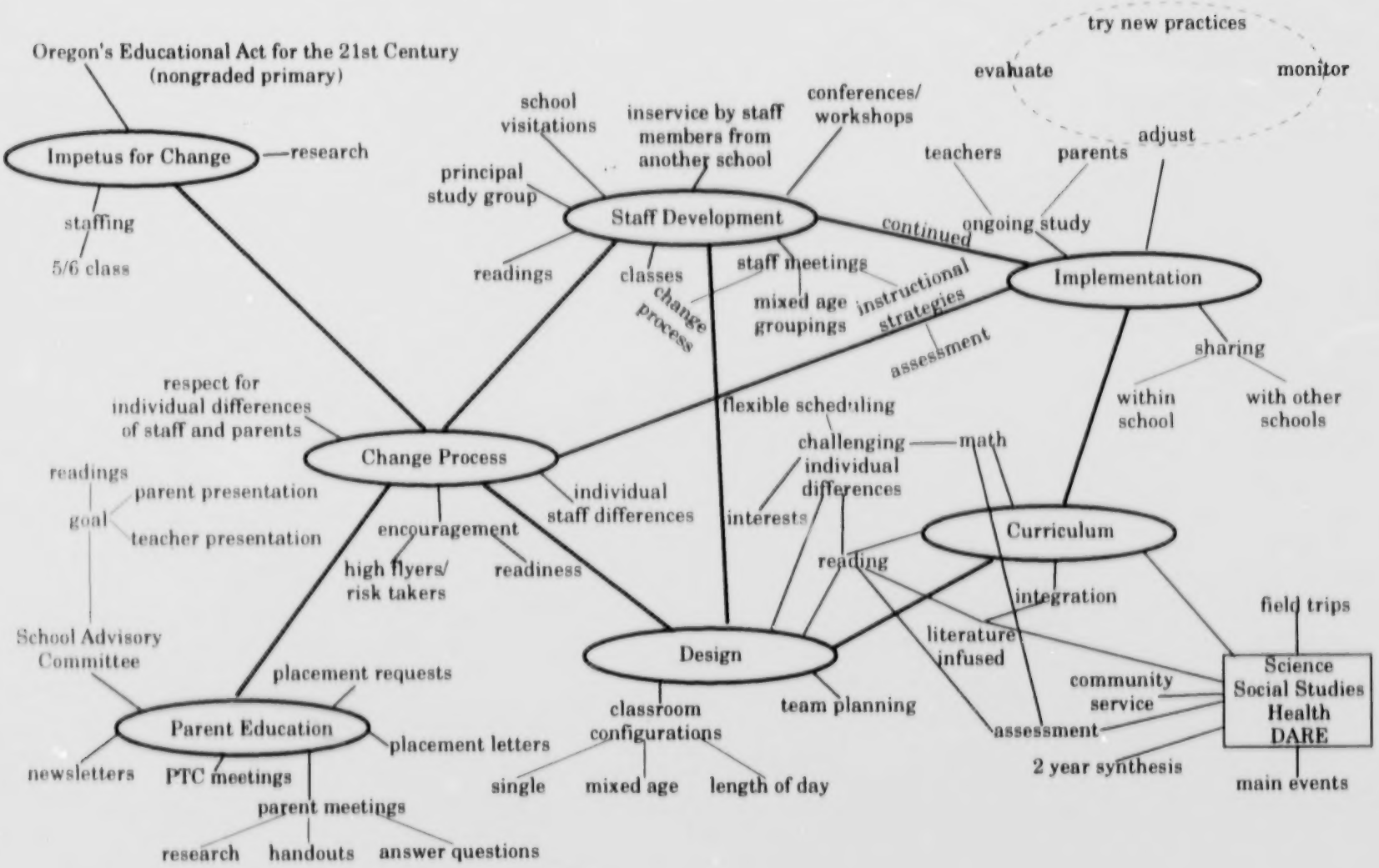
How are students grouped?

Classes at Uplands have a balance of high, medium and low performing students. Every effort is made for balance in boy/girl ratios, abilities, learning styles, behavioral patterns, and special needs students. Care is taken to have as equitable as possible the number of students from each age/grade level. Most students spend two years with the same teacher. There are exceptions to this. Input from parents about the learning environment their child learns best in is welcome. Current and former teachers also contribute input for classroom placements.

Some students will be with the same teacher for two years in a row. If after a year this does not seem to be an optimal placement, are there options?

Teachers and parents report that when teachers spend more than one year with a group of students, less time is spent on building new relationships between teachers, students and parents. It appears to enhance stability, security, and meaningful relationships and reduce the amount of time spent on learning new routines and establishing classroom management. Generally, this is advantageous for everyone. However, if there is a situation that does not seem to be in the best interest of a child to spend two years with a teacher and group of students, a change of placement should be discussed with the principal.

Change Process — Uplands Elementary School
Mixed Age Grouping and Developmentally Appropriate Practices



View Acres Elementary
4828 SE View Acres Road
Milwaukie, OR 97267-3019
(503) 653-3694
District: North Clackamas

Principal: Scott Burks
School Size:
435 students
17 teachers
1 principal

Program Implemented: 1993-94
Program Descriptors:

- DAP
- Integrated Thematic Instruction
- Whole Language
- Literature-based Reading
- Portfolios
- Parent Volunteers

View Acres implemented a mixed-age program because research and practice indicated clear benefits socially and emotionally for children. Interested teachers studied the research and took classes. Discussion with parents, the PTO, and other teachers took place in order to educate and allow input for the program. Resources included books on child-centered classes and multi-age grouping, NAEYC brochures, and summer classes. There are three mixed-age first-second classrooms, one regular first grade and one second grade. For 1994-95, there will be five first-seconds. The project approach is being initiated in two classrooms along with Box It-Bag It Math, literature-based reading, whole language, and portfolios.

Parents are regular volunteers in the classrooms. Parents are very supportive and contribute greatly to the program.

Visitors need to contact the principal prior to the planned date of visitation.

Willamette Primary
1403 SE 12th Street
West Linn, OR 97068
(503) 656-6355
District: West Linn-Wilsonville

Principal: Jane Stickney
School Size:
520 students
27 teachers
1 principal

Program Implemented: 1990
Program Descriptors:

- Working Portfolios
- Integrative Instruction and Curriculum
- Inquiry-base

In order to support an integrated inquiry-based instructional program as Willamette Primary opened a new school in the fall of 1990, the faculty implemented mixed-age groupings among other innovations. (See the following sheet of Guiding Principles). Willamette's program is kindergarten-first, second-third, and fourth-fifth. Curriculum and instruction are integrative, open, flexible, and responsive to children's interests and developing capabilities. Self-evaluation is a natural part of the learning process. A variety of evaluation formats provide evidence about students' thinking; i.e., drawings, conferences, log notes, writings, demonstrations, displays, and formal presentations. Working portfolios are used for evaluation by the child and the teacher. Willamette Primary halls and classrooms are designed to invite children's inquiry. Students are engaged in conversation, surrounded by print, and encounter a wealth of materials to support science and math developments.

Parents are welcomed as active partners in the learning community. Willamette teachers are available as resources to do presentations to colleagues. A video of the program is in progress. Visitors are welcome, but need to call for an appointment.

WILLAMETTE PRIMARY SCHOOL
GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Willamette Primary School provides a thought-provoking environment that awakens the mind and encourages children and adults to go where questions lead. The future belongs to the learners.

We believe in . . .

- respecting the uniqueness of childhood and together celebrating wonder and the journey of learning.
- honoring the ethic of craftsmanship through which each learner develops a personal signature.
- empowering learners through the development of many forms of literacy.
- valuing meaningful investigation and thoughtful reflection.
- acting responsibly, acknowledging that our actions and interactions impact the quality of our lives.
- embracing the diversity of individuals, ideas and cultures, each of which contributes to the richness of our global community.

These guiding principals were written by the Willamette Primary School staff on June 17, 1991.

WILLAMETTE PRIMARY SCHOOL
BEHAVIOR GUIDELINES

At Willamette Primary School we hold the high expectation that children and adults will model safe and respectful behavior.

Be safe. Be friendly.

1. Children will be treated with gentle respect and are to respond respectfully to all children and adults in the school.

   - Talking back and arguing are not acceptable.
   - Hurting another person either physically or with words is not acceptable and requires a conversation with the instructional coordinator or principal.

   Parents and playground supervisors are encouraged to let teachers and the principal know about children who concern them. Good communication about children allows us all to better serve the children.

2. Children are to follow playground safety rules at all times. All adults will reinforce the same safety rules.

   - sit on the swings
   - take turns on the track ride
   - play games by the rules
   - go up the ladders and down the slides
   - go down the slides sitting and facing forward
   - do not leave the playground for any reason (even to chase a ball)
   - ask permission to re-enter the building—get a clip pass
   - line up with your teacher when the whistle blows
   - solve problems by talking things over or asking for help

3. Moving through the halls, and up and down the stairs, with quietness shows respect for others who are studying. Moving in lines one or two abreast allows others to pass. Children can be expected to walk like ladies and gentlemen using soft voices and quiet feet on the stairs.

4. Children will be encouraged to greet others politely, say please and thank you, and offer assistance when necessary (offering to help carry things, opening doors, helping to pick up a spill).

   Parents and teachers are encouraged to discuss, model, practice, and review with the children polite conventions, good manners, and appropriate behavior. Misbehavior is an opportunity for adults to teach children a better response. Problem solving techniques will be taught and modeled by all adults. Small or first time infractions may result in a conversation or sit-down time-out. When children persist with the same misbehavior, when children get angry or need more guidance, the principal, instructional coordinator, and counselor will work with them to establish new habits.

"It is up to us to set a model and give other people a chance to discover the grace within them and between us."

Jennifer James

CLATSOP COUNTY

Lewis & Clark Elementary
Route 3, Box 145
Astoria, OR 97103-9199
(503) 325-2032
District: Astoria

Principal: Gary Sunderland
School Size:
350 students
21 teachers
1 principal

Program Implemented: 1991
Program Descriptors:

- Individualized, Integrated Thematic Instruction
- Cooperative Learning
- Child-centered
- Process Writing
- Whole Language
- Parents as Partners
- Math Labs
- Developmental Progress Reports

During the fall of 1992, some members of the intermediate staff at Lewis and Clark indicated an interest in the mixed-age structure. They had recently attended workshops and presentations sponsored by the Oregon Department of Education, where they heard positive reports from teachers around the state who had restructured their schools. The school gathered resource materials, studied the research, and attended further training sessions. By the winter of 1992, the staff had determined that a mixed-age structure would provide the best opportunity for helping students develop the characteristics they need in order to become responsive and responsible people in the future. The intermediate team identified the key teaching techniques needed for their mixed-age classrooms. Next they made plans to attend workshops and adjust their classroom presentations in order to prepare for the change. During the summer, the district provided time for the team to meet and plan their curriculum. During the school year, the team was given a half-day off each month for meetings and an extra hour each week for individual planning. This support has continued. With the student population up, the district supported an additional teacher for the team.

Lewis and Clark's program includes: integrated, individualized and thematic instruction, cognitive, physical, emotional and social curriculum, proactive discipline practices, technologies, cooperative learning, child-centered model, hands-on active learning, teacher facilitated instruction, process writing, whole language, developmental progress reports, math labs, continuous student progress, parents as partners, and enrichment for all students. A two year design is used for content areas. During 1992-93, Lewis and Clark assessed students' academic progress, surveyed the attitudes of student and parents, and held a parent meeting to share their findings and gain suggestions to improve the program.

For the first year of the program, the first day of school was devoted to a parent-student orientation. Parents new to the program attend an evening presentation now. During the first three weeks of every school year, the students are introduced to the new procedures and routines of mixed-age classrooms during a "training period." Lewis and Clark Elementary welcomes visitors.

COLUMBIA COUNTY

These schools participated in the following program.

Lincoln Elementary
1462 Bridge Street
Vernonia, OR 97064-1036
(503) 429-7941
District: Vernonia

Principal: Randall Aultman
School Size:
540 students
32 teachers
2 principals

Mist Elementary
69163 Highway 47
Mist, OR 97016
(503) 755-2486
District: Vernonia

Principal: Sunny Hunteman
School Size:
540 students
32 teachers
2 principals

Washington Grade
199 Bridge Street
Vernonia, OR 97064-1399
(503) 429-7941
District: Vernonia

Principal: Randall Aultman
School Size:
540 students
32 teachers
2 principals

Program Implemented: 1992
Program Descriptors:
- DAP
- Portfolios
- Skill Checklists
- Inclusion Model

The Superintendent and Principal presented the program to the school board. Several parent nights were scheduled to inform parents of the change to a mixed-age program. The staff supported the program because after studying the research, they felt the program was more developmentally appropriate for children, and many students were not succeeding in the traditional grade-level system. Staff visited several schools and attended workshops. Also, staff was paid to develop curriculum during the summers of 1992 and 1993. Staff development moneys doubled from $3,500 to $7,000. Discussions started in early 1992, and a kindergarten-first was implemented in the fall of 1992. There are five sections of kindergarten-first with about twenty-four students in each class. There are four second-third classes with about twenty-five students in each, three classes of third-fourth, and two classes of fifth-sixth. Curriculum alternates every year. Assessment includes portfolios and skill checklists. Inclusion of special services, Chapter One and TAG are part of the program. Parents were involved initially, and continue to be with parent-input nights after each grading period.

Teachers are available as resources to explain the program. Visitors need to schedule a date prior to a visitation.

Quincy-Mayger Elementary
79640 Quincy-Mayger Road
Clatskanie, OR 97016
(503) 728-2021
District: Columbia

Principal: John Lindsley
School Size:
150 students
6 teachers
.5 principal

Program Implemented: Fall, 1992
Program Descriptors:
- Portfolios
- Electronic Network

Quincy-Mayger started with training, visitations, speakers, meetings, and a group effort in order to move ahead on the 21st Century reform. Also, the facility was conducive for "blending" classrooms. The process was discussed as a school with many planned activities for moving to first-second-third mixed-age classrooms. During 1993-94, the whole school went to mixed-age; i.e., kindergarten-first, second-third, and fourth-fifth. The classes have created a blended curriculum and environment. Portfolios are used. Parents attended meetings to discuss the changes in the school and had opportunities to give feedback. The whole school is electronically networked with Macintoshes in order to facilitate communication across the school.

Visitors need to call the principal in advance.

COOS COUNTY

Bangor Elementary
2121 Madrona
North Bend, OR 97459-2142
(503) 756-8345
District: North Bend

Principal: Avadna Boshears
School Size:
420 students
16 teachers
1 principal

Program Implemented: 1993-94
Program Descriptors:
- Parent Nights
- Thematic Units

Bangor Elementary implemented a mixed-age program in part because of House Bill 3565 and the interest of two teachers. These teachers expressed their interest in having a mixed-age classroom in February, 1993. The teachers visited some schools in the state and locally, attended workshops and a week-long class during the summer which was funded by the district. The district showed support by providing additional supplies. A parent meeting was held after notices were sent home to the potential first-second graders in the program. Two teachers in the program are developing a two-year curriculum based on thematic units. Parent nights are held at the end of a thematic unit, and are well attended.

Since this has been the first year of the program, visitors have not been encouraged, but are welcome.

Blossom Gulch Elementary
PO Box 509
Coos Bay, OR 97420
(503) 267-1342
District: Coos Bay

Principal: Suzanne Marchant
School Size:
600 students
22 teachers
1.5 principals

Program Implemented: Fall, 1992
Program Descriptors:
- DAP
- Hands-on & Project Activities
- Checklists
- Portfolios
- Parent Volunteers

Blossom Gulch wanted students to remain with the same teachers for two years in order to eliminate the need for students and teachers to get acquainted with each other every year. The school believed this would provide for greater continuity in the child's education, and would enhance learning by providing each student the opportunity to pick up where he or she finished in the spring. Also, mixed-age grouping more closely resembled family and neighborhood groups. Self-worth of older children would be enhanced by providing leadership for the younger students, while these students would find security in working with older children. Team teaching would provide opportunities for planning and conferencing with students and parents. Curriculum with a mixed-age program would be flexible and multi-dimensional. This would provide a wide range of activities with varying degrees of difficulty and meet the needs of all students, thereby minimizing failure and maximizing success.

Teachers expressed an interest in mixed-age grouping in the spring, read lots of materials and attended workshops. Parent and teacher meetings were held. The mixed-age groups are organized into teams of two teachers with students from two grade levels; i.e., first-second. The teachers have two classrooms with a double door opening between the rooms. The teachers share the planning of curriculum, units and projects. The curriculum follows the district-adopted curriculum with an emphasis on hands-on activities and projects. The writing process receives special emphasis. Language arts and math are taught at each student's level rather than at grade level. A typical day will have large group time when all students are brought together for instruction, small group skill instruction time with one to ten students, and hands-on

activities and project time. Assessment is done through portfolios, skill checklists, and conferences. Since the district still uses a report card, the traditional grade book is used.

Parents are encouraged to volunteer in the classrooms on a regular schedule. Suggestions for child-parent projects are sent home on a regular basis.

Visitors are encouraged in the school. All visitors must sign in at the office and get a visitor's pass.

Hillcrest Elementary
1100 Main Street
North Bend, OR 97459-2604
(503) 756-8348
District: North Bend

Principal: Sally Prouty
School Size:
460 students
21 teachers
1 principal

Program Implemented: September, 1992
Program Descriptors:

- Primary Level
- Whole Language
- Literature-based Reading
- Math Their Way
- Integrated Curriculum
- Thematic Units
- Writing Process
- Parent Involvement

The North Bend School District established a committee of primary teachers to investigate alternative student groupings. The committee was created in order to study the research to support House Bill 3565 and to deal with the concerns of the primary teachers about the progress of their students in kindergarten and first grade. The committee worked from December, 1990 until May, 1991. Committee members visited sites that were piloting mixed-age classrooms and "junior first" programs.

Two teachers from Hillcrest continued their own study of mixed-age grouping by attending workshops and doing additional visitations during 1991-92. In April, 1992, these two teachers, with the "principal's blessing," approached the school board with the request to establish two mixed-age classrooms for the 1992-93 school year. There were two first-second classrooms for 1993-94 and the possibility of more classrooms for 1994-95. The teachers have self-contained classrooms with heterogeneous groups of first and second graders. The classrooms are child-centered and incorporate whole language, literature based reading, the writing process, and Math Their Way. The teachers use integrated curriculum and thematic units. Assessment includes: teacher-made tests, narrative reports, curriculum checklists, and a district report card. Instructional strategies are whole group instruction, small group instruction, and individual conferencing. Students remain with the same teachers for a two year continuum.

Informational meetings have been held for the last two years with parents new to the program. Parents request that their children be placed in the program. The classrooms encourage parent volunteers, have a biweekly newsletter, and have parent presentations at the conclusion of each theme. Parents are a part of the educational process.

The teachers in the program and Hillcrest's professional library are available as resources to other schools. Copies of the parent and student survey are also available.

Visitors are welcome at any time with a week's advance notice. Visitors will be actively involved in the classrooms.

Powers Elementary
PO Box 479
Powers, OR 97466
(503) 439-2281
District: Powers

Principal: Mary Blondell
School Size:
95 students
4 teachers
1 principal

Program Implemented: 1993-94
Program Descriptors:

- Portfolios
- Performance-based Standards

Powers implemented a mixed-age program for the sake of economy and due to a reduction in staff. The school is moving toward portfolios and performance-based standards. Visitors should contact the district office at 439-2291 to schedule a visitation.

DESCHUTES COUNTY

Brothers School
PO Box 130
Brothers, OR 97712-9998
(503) 576-2551
District: Brothers

Principal: Linda Moore
School Size:
13 students
1 teacher-principal

Program Implemented: Always Been
Program Descriptors:
- Flexible Groupings
- One-room District

Brothers is a one-room, K-8 school and district with students coming from 20 miles in all directions. The school operates as a large family. Math, language arts and reading are individualized; science, social studies, and health are age grouped; physical education, music and art are whole class. Parents transport their own children and have daily contact with the program and, therefore, know their children's daily progress. Almost half of the students are children of board members.

Visitors are welcome as long as it's not disruptive to the program. Visitors need to schedule in advance and will probably be put to work while at Brothers School because the students view any adult in the school as a resource.

Buckingham Elementary
62560 Hamby
Bend, OR 97701-9575
(503) 383-6143
District: Bend-LaPine

Principal: Marion Morehouse
School Size:
620 students
22 teachers
1 principal

Program Implemented: Fall, 1992
Program Descriptors:
- DAP
- Portfolios
- Change Process
- Curriculum Integration
- Parent Talks
- Cooperative Learning
- Inclusion Model

As an outcome from Oregon's legislated Educational Act for the 21st Century, Buckingham pioneered the implementation of mixed-age classrooms and "new tools for teaching" through innovations such as developmentally appropriate practices, cooperative learning, integrated curriculum, and the inclusion model. In the fall of 1990, the elementary principals established for two years the goal of restructuring in order to provide choice for parents and appropriate placement for children. Some classrooms remained conventional with single-grade parameters while others became mixed. The principal and teachers visited successful restructured projects in other schools during the winter of 1990. In the spring of 1991, Vicki Cochran, Oregon Distinguished Educator, visited Buckingham to talk about change, teachers attended the Lillian Katz workshop, out-of-district site visitations continued, and faculty interacted with research, practicing professionals, parents and community groups.

Fourteen classroom teachers decided to do mixed-age grouping while the remaining conventional single-age classrooms incorporated a varying number of developmentally appropriate practices. In the summer of 1991, teachers participated in a class, and parents and community members attended a session on HB 3565. The fall of 1991 saw Buckingham with six first-second classrooms, two second-third classrooms, and three fourth-fifth classrooms. The school instituted "Parent Talks" in order to raise educational

awareness with parents and the community. In the spring of 1992, the school wrote a new vision statement and began to set new goals.

On alternating Mondays, the staff met to share successes and failures. The district allowed the teachers one-half day to evaluate their pilot project. Buckingham wrote and submitted a 21st Century Restructuring Grant application in the fall of 1993 in order to provide: more staff development to support the innovative strategies the school was striving to implement, continuous building level and team collaboration during school hours, and six trained substitute teachers to maintain an optimum level of learning in the classrooms while the teachers were out of their classrooms involved in collaborating. The P.T.A. provided interim dollars for the goals to be achieved from September through November. In the winter of 1993, Buckingham received word from the Department of Education that grant moneys would be provided for eighteen months. A team was sent to Oregon's ASCD Research Institute in April.

DOUGLAS COUNTY

Eastwood Elementary
2550 SE Waldon Avenue
Roseburg, OR 97470-3899
(503) 440-4180
District: Roseburg

Principal: Jim Knapp
School Size:
428 students
25 teachers
1 principal

Program Implemented: 1993-94
Program Descriptor:
- Goal-based Curriculum

Eastwood Elementary implemented mixed-age grouping because the school believed teachers should stay with the same students for two or more years. Eastwood's program was implemented after visiting Canadian schools and Bellevue, Washington. Eastwood's faculty adopted the practices of these schools. During 1992-93, Eastwood completed a self-analysis, and from 1990-94 the school was involved in extensive staff development and off-campus visitations. These activities culminated in a restructuring of the school during 1993-94.

Eastwood's mixed-age program includes a first-second grade, a third-fourth grade, and a fifth-sixth grade. Kindergarten is not mixed-aged. Curriculum is goal-based, not textbook based, and tied to the Oregon Statewide Assessment Tests. There is a high degree of parent support, but there is limited parent involvement so far.

Resources are available upon request. Visitations are one day per week and can be scheduled through the office.

Glide Elementary
1477 Glide Loop Road
Glide, OR 97443-9758
(503) 496-3524
District: Glide

Principal: Stan Johns
School Size:
430 students
28 teachers
1 principal

Program Implemented: Fall, 1993
Program Descriptors:
- DAP
- Whole Language
- Manipulative Math
- Learning Centers
- Cooperative Groups
- Parent Volunteers

Glide implemented a mixed-age program to facilitate learning under a developmentally appropriate philosophy. The staff developed a philosophy and mission statement, attended workshops and trainings, reviewed the research, invited resource groups and people to the school, and implemented developmentally appropriate practices in selected curricular areas. Newsletters were sent to parents about the new program. Information meetings were held with parents, and parents were invited to volunteer in the classrooms. The Board and the Superintendent were kept informed. The seven-eight year old mixed-age group will be shifting to eight-nine year olds. Whole language, manipulative math, learning centers, cooperative learning groups, whole language instruction and developmentally appropriate practices are incorporated into the curriculum.

Parents are volunteers in the program and provide formal and informal program assessment.

Visitors need to call the school to arrange a visitation and can also call to request program information.

Myrtle Creek Elementary
651 NE Division
Myrtle Creek, OR 97457
(503) 863-3168
District: South Umpqua

Principal: Jim Sheldahl
School Size:
500 students
28 teachers
1 principal

Program Implemented: 1993-94
Program Descriptors:
- DAP
- Cooperative Projects

Myrtle Creek's mixed-age program has a few pilot classrooms with more classrooms probably being added next year. Staff inservice generated initial interest among the teachers. Teachers attended workshops and classes over a two-year period. Information was sent to parents, and they were offered a choice about their participation in the program. The program presently consists of two classrooms of first-second. Personnel with the learning center, Chapter 1 and the resource room provide services in the classrooms. Students are assessed using measures aligned with the district's approved goals. There are many cooperative projects; i.e., Box-it and Bag-it, success in reading-writing. Parents are encouraged to help in the classrooms.

Visitors need to make arrangements directly with teachers or by contacting the office. All visitors need to check in with the office upon arrival.

Yoncalla Elementary
401 First Street
Yoncalla, OR 97499-0568
(503) 849-2158
District: Yoncalla

Principal: Ken Sprute
School Size:
295 students
15 teachers
1 principal

Program Implemented: September, 1993
Program Descriptor:
- Team Teaching

Yoncalla implemented a mixed-age program because of the state's suggestion to move to mixed-age grouping. Also, the program was a way to balance student-teacher ratios and a better way to educate students. The elementary group or team was organized in the spring of 1993. School visitations and research were conducted prior to making the transition. Team members met regularly to plan. Students were assigned to classrooms during the summer and the program started in September, 1993. The school is organized by kindergarten, first, first-second, second-third, and third-fourth. The second-third classroom is a team teaching situation. Initially, there were many parent volunteers and concerns, but there is a positive feeling about the program now.

Teachers are available as resources. Visitors are welcome anytime, but need to call in advance.

JACKSON COUNTY

Glenn D. Hale Elementary
PO Box 197
Eagle Point, OR 97524
(503) 830-1280
District: Eagle Point

Principal: Jeanie Thibault
School Size:
340 students
21 teachers
1 principal

Program Implemented: 1989-90
Program Descriptors:

- DAP
- Active Learning and Manipulatives
- Cooperative Learning Groups
- Peer Tutoring
- Flexible Learning Groups
- Continuous Progress
- Authentic Assessment
- Parent Involvement
- Comprehensive Services
- Anecdotal Reports and Portfolios
- Integrated Curriculum

The creation of mixed-age classes was consistent with the ways in which Glenn D. Hale was teaching their students and helped the teachers in their efforts to improve on what they were already doing. The design of the program was also consistent with what the staff believed about how children learn and grow developmentally, and promoted a view of curriculum and learning in which student progress was seen as continuous. In addition, the staff supported mixed-age grouping because it increased their overall ability to be more flexible in meeting individual and group needs, and offered the advantage of having teachers and students maintain relationships for a longer period of time. Developmental appropriateness at Glenn D. Hale means: integrated curriculum, active learning with manipulatives, shared experiences with individual responses, focus on thinking, talking and communicating with adults and children, cooperative learning groups, peer tutoring, children as teacher, flexible learning groups, continuous progress, authentic assessment, anecdotal reports and portfolios, time for reflection, parent involvement, and comprehensive services.

Hoover Elementary
2323 Siskiyou Boulevard
Medford, OR 97504
(503) 776-8826
District: Jackson County

Principal: Ed Nicholson
School Size:
590 students
28 teachers
1 principal

Program Implemented: September, 1992
Program Descriptors:

- DAP
- Integrated Instruction
- Parent Volunteers
- TAG

Hoover Elementary applied for and received a TAG grant from the Department of Education in order to meet the needs of students more effectively by delivering instruction according to diagnosed needs rather than age or grade. The faculty wanted to increase the number of students working on "out of grade level" materials and increase the amount of direct teacher instruction while meeting the recommendations of HB 3565.

Administrators of Hoover and Roosevelt Schools, with the district offices of staff development and TAG, wrote the grant for multi-age teams. After much dialogue with teachers, team leaders and teachers were selected in May, 1992. These team leaders and teachers had opportunities for inservice and planning

time during the summer of 1992 and during the 1992-93 school year. Hoover has a "school within a school." There are two traditional graded classes at each grade, a 3-teacher team for six and seven year olds (first and second graders), and a 4-teacher team for eight, nine, and ten year olds (third, fourth and fifth graders). All teachers teach all curricular areas. Students are grouped and regrouped for subject areas from multi-age homerooms. Integrated curriculum units and basic texts are used with developmentally appropriate practices for instruction and assessment. Parents were informed of the objectives of the program and given the opportunity to request to have their children included in or excluded from the program. In the second year of the program, there were more requests for the teams than could be accommodated. Many parent volunteers work in the classrooms on a regular basis.

Upon request, Hoover will send a copy of a fourteen page article, "Thinking of Multi-aging? Ask These Questions," which outlines issues to be addressed and has questions answered by Hoover. Several integrated curriculum units are available from the Medford School District TAG Office at 500 Monroe, Medford, 97501. Hoover gladly accommodates pre-arranged visits.

Jewett Elementary
1001 Manzanita Street
Central Point, OR 97502-3099
(503) 664-6611
District: Central Point

Principal: Candace Manary
School Size:
450 students
19 teachers
1 principal

Program Implemented: 1992-93
Program Descriptors:
- DAP
- Hands-on & Child-directed Curriculum
- Site Council
- Parent Volunteers

Jewett Elementary implemented a mixed-age program in order to better meet the needs of children in a changing society. The faculty believed that mixed-age groupings allowed children to progress at their own rates and provided a more natural setting for learning. A three year district-wide plan was implemented with the first year for study. The year was spent doing visitations to schools around the state, and having teachers serve on committees and study the available research on DAP, integrated curriculum, whole language, and cooperative groups. During the second year, interested teachers were supported with planning time and additional funds to create pilot programs. The pilot programs were evaluated and long-term district recommendations were made. Additional pilots were implemented during the third and present year.

Jewett has different grade configurations for placement options. Some teachers "loop" to the next grade and keep their students for two years. There are two first-second classes and two fourth-fifth classes. Additional mixed-age classes will be added next year. The curriculum is hands-on and child-directed.

Six parent nights were scheduled during the pilot year to include parents in the planning process. Parents are classroom volunteers and serve on the Site Council.

Visitors are welcome, but arrangements need to be made in advance with the principal.

Lincoln Elementary
320 Beach Street
Ashland, OR 97520
(503) 482-2416
District: Ashland

Principal: Rose Marie Davis
School Size:
323 students
14 teachers
1 principal

Program Implemented: 1984
Program Descriptors:
- DAP

- Integrated, Thematic Curriculum
- Parent Participation

Lincoln Elementary had a large parent group within their attendance area that wanted a multi-age parent participation classroom. A similar program had been implemented and was successful at Walker School in the same district. Parents and staff of Walker School shared their knowledge with interested parents and staff at Lincoln. The district's Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, and school board supported the concept. Lincoln was given permission to implement a program when there were enough students to create a multi-age class. The class became a reality in August, 1984. As interest in multi-age parent participation classrooms continued, more multi-age classes were added. All classrooms operate on the philosophy of developmentally appropriate practices. Teachers use integrated thematic approaches in curriculum, and the same assessment and instructional strategies as other district teachers.

Parents participate in multi-age and traditional classrooms. Initially, parents agreed to participate for three hours a week. Many parents still contribute at least three hours a week, but now teachers and parents work together on the kind and amount of parent participation. Parent participation centers on the strengths and expertise of the parents.

Visitors need to contact teachers or the principal to schedule a visit. Lincoln would like to know in advance what visitors wish to observe and when.

JOSEPHINE COUNTY

Merlin Primary
345 Merlin Rd.
Merlin, OR 97532
(503) 471-2456
District: Josephine County

Principal: Constance Ricotta
School Size:
150 students
6 teachers
1 principal

Program Implemented: September, 1993
Program Descriptors:

- DAP
- Integrated Thematic Instruction
- Site Council

Merlin Primary implemented a mixed-age program so they could become a model for other elementary schools in the district. The planning process involved doing research, reopening a small school for only primary, selecting staff, and participating in staff development activities, which meant obtaining money and time in order to do school visitations and attend workshops.

Merlin's mixed-age program has 50 students, two teachers and one aide in a kindergarten-first class; 50 students, two teachers, and one aide in a first-second-third class; and 50 students, two teachers and one aide in a second-third class. Developmentally appropriate practices, High-Scope curriculum, and integrated thematic instruction are the basis for the program. Parents were very informed about the program before implementation, and are involved on the Site Council. All six teachers at Merlin work collaboratively to implement a K-3 curriculum.

Visitors need to schedule an appointment by contacting the school.

Williams Elementary
PO Box 88
Williams, OR 97544
(503) 846-7224
District: Josephine County

Principal: Juanita Fagan
School Size:
160 students
8 teachers
1 principal

Program Implemented: January, 1993
Program Descriptors:

- Integrated Curriculum
- Whole Language
- Readers and Writers Workshops
- Inclusion
- Site Council

Williams Elementary had large classes of thirty-four and thirty-six in second and fifth grades. The school has been active in reform issues with House Bill 3565. In January, 1993, parents were surveyed and the results indicated that parents wanted a change. The school created a second-third-fifth mixed-age classroom with two teachers teaming. As the class progressed and the school realized the advantages of mixed-age grouping, the faculty started planning for total implementation for the fall, 1993. As a total faculty, considerations were given to the following areas as teachers developed the groupings: teacher comfort levels, the numbers of students, the special needs of students, and student behaviors. The curriculum is integrated using social studies-science themes. Teachers designed a three year program. Whole language, readers and writers workshop, problem solving, and inclusion of Chapter 1 and special education students are the primary characteristics of the curriculum. The program includes a full-day kindergarten, first-second, first-second-third, second-third, third-fourth-fifth, and fifth-sixth. The Site Council actively participates in curriculum development.

Parents were involved in the change to a new program and informed about the potential changes in classrooms and curriculum through informational meetings and articles.

Visitors need to call in advance to schedule a visit.

Wolf Creek Elementary
PO Box 325
Wolf Creek, OR 97497
(503) 866-2496
District: Josephine County

Principal: David Wells
School Size:
140 students
6 teachers
1 principal

Program Implemented: September, 1993
Program Descriptors:

- Whole Language
- Thematic Units
- Parent On-Site Committee
- Reader's & Writer's Workshops

Wolf Creek Elementary implemented their mixed-age program to keep in line with the district's direction and goals, but it was a staff decision. The faculty initially read literature and followed a district office mandate before making the recommendation for the mixed-age groupings be: kindergarten, first to third graders, third and fourth graders, and fourth and fifth graders. Faculty attended in-district workshops in June and August, 1993. In September and October the school was reorganized to a mixed-age program due to enrollment increases. The current program has kindergarten, first and second, third, fourth and fifth. The faculty continue to attend classes and workshops on topics related to mixed-age grouping. The program is based on whole language approaches, reader's and writer's workshops, and thematic units in science, health and social studies.

Groups of visitors should make prior arrangements with the school. Individuals are welcome almost any time.

KLAMATH COUNTY

Gilchrist Elementary
PO Box 668
Gilchrist, OR 97737-0668
(503) 433-2295
District: Klamath County

Principal: Duane Barstad
School Size:
280 students
11 teachers
2 principals (K-12)

Program Implemented: September, 1993
Program Descriptors:
- DAP
- Site Council
- Team Teaching

Gilchrist Elementary implemented mixed-age grouping because it allowed for developmentally appropriate practices, supported the recommendations of the 21st Century Schools Act, compensated for a reduction in staff, and fit the philosophy of the school. Discussion on adopting a mixed-age philosophy took place during the fall of 1992 and continued with Gilchrist's Site Council. The staff was interested, so inservices, workshops and summer courses followed. By the 1993-94 school year, forty percent of the classrooms were mixed-age. There are three fifth-sixth classes and one second-third class. The fifth-sixth classes use team teaching for math, reading and writing in the mornings. The classes are self-contained during the afternoons for the other subjects.

Parents are welcome to volunteer, but there have not been many parent volunteers in the mixed-age program. At this point, Gilchrist is not ready for visitors.

Keno Elementary
PO Box 187
Keno, OR 97627
(503) 883-5055
District: Klamath County

Principal: Thomas Dyer
School Size:
200 students
8 teachers
1 principal

Program Implemented: 1992-93
Program Descriptors:
- Parent Volunteers
- CIM Benchmarks

Developmentally appropriate instruction and a way to accommodate learning styles of students motivated Keno Elementary to implement a mixed-age program. The program resulted after ongoing inservice activities related to mixed-age instruction, extensive training in learning styles, and sufficient district resources. Both traditional and mixed-age classes are in place. Work is currently in process to filter the CIM benchmarks into the program. The parent volunteer program is expanding.

Visitors are not encouraged as Keno prefers not to be interrupted.

Pelican Elementary
501 McLean Street
Klamath Falls, OR 97601-4275
(503) 883-4765
District: Klamath Falls

Principal: Brant Baldini
School Size:
215 students
12 teachers
1 principal

Program Implemented: 1993
Program Descriptors:
- Activity-based Curriculum
- Technology-multi-media
- Business Partnerships

- Integrated Curriculum
- Portfolio Assessment

Pelican School implemented a mixed-age program in order to better fit the needs of students. Pelican wrote grants to receive $25,000 to implement activity-based curriculum and an extensive technology and multi-media component. Two teachers are working together in a fourth-fifth blended classroom as part of a three year project using activity-based units with integrated curriculum. Cross-grading with third and sixth graders occurs for reading, math, and spelling.

There has been support from the school board, the district office, and parents. Many volunteers are involved. There are strong business partnerships. Parents sign a contract at the beginning of the year to volunteer their time in the classrooms.

Presentations are available upon request with prior notice. Wednesday mornings are reserved for visitors within the district, and out-of-district visitors are welcome upon request with advance notice.

LAKE COUNTY

Paisley Elementary
PO Box 97
Paisley, OR 97636
(503) 943-3111
District: Paisley

Principal: Dan Thomas
School Size:
110 students
10 teachers
1 principal

Program Implemented: Have always been

Mixed-age grouping is what works for Paisley Elementary and resulted from parents, the board, teachers, and the administration realizing that resources and the situation required a program to meet local needs as defined by the local community. Paisley's program is first-second, third-fourth, and fifth-sixth.

Visitors are welcome.

LANE COUNTY

Adams Elementary
950 W 22nd
Eugene, OR 97405-2199
(503) 687-3475
District: Eugene

Principal: Penny McDonald
School Size:
249 students
8.5 teachers
1 principal

Program Implemented: 1992-93
Program Descriptor:
- Site Council

Adams has had combined classrooms for several years and implemented a mixed-age program in order to balance homeroom class loads, to support the philosophy of developmentally appropriate practices, and to have students stay with their teachers for more than one year. The staff reached consensus on the optimum ways to group students through committees, meetings and surveys. Parents can request teachers, the grouping, and the environment by completing a form which requires a description of the child and his or her needs. The principal encouraged a teacher who was willing to implement a full mixed-age classroom. Adams has one kindergarten, one mixed-age primary classroom, one first grade, three second-third classrooms, and three fourth-fifth classrooms. The Site Council is helping determine how to use the staff best by studying classroom grouping options.

Visitors should contact Penny McDonald, Principal.

Camp Creek Elementary
37770 Camp Creek Road
Springfield, OR 97478
(503) 744-6425
District: Springfield

Principal: Carole Sterry
School Size:
86 students
4 teachers
.3 principal

Program Implemented: Fall, 1992
Program Descriptors:
- DAP
- Site Council
- Integrated & Thematic Curriculum
- Cooperative Learning
- Portfolio Assessment
- Three-way Conferencing
- Parent Volunteers
- Parent Education

As a small school with four combined K-5 classrooms, Camp Creek did not need to be convinced of the advantages of mixed-age classrooms. The faculty fully supported the mixed-age, developmentally appropriate philosophy. All students were deliberately placed in mixed-age classrooms in the fall of 1992. Previously, students were placed in mixed-age classrooms to even out student placements. Camp Creek's Site Council assisted with the planning and implementation of the program. Students were heterogeneously mixed in all classes. The program consists of one class of kindergarten-first, one class of first-second-third, one class of third-fourth, and one class of fourth-fifth. Curriculum is integrated and thematic. Teachers utilize reading-writing workshops, hands-on activities for math and science, cooperative learning, portfolio assessment, and three-way conferencing.

Parents have participated in the mixed-age program design as members of the Site Council and assist with program evaluation. Parents work as volunteers in the classrooms. A large percentage of parents participate in informational programs provided by the school for the purpose of helping parents develop skills and an understanding of appropriate practices for supporting children at school and at home.

Camp Creek has teachers, an administrator, and a curriculum specialist available as resources on mixed-age programs. Visitors are welcome, but need to call in advance of a visit.

Corridor Alternative
250 Silver Lane
Eugene, OR 97404-2298
(503) 687-3165
District: Eugene

Principal: Judy Sobba
School Size:
240 students
12 teachers
1 principal

Program Implemented: 1974
Program Descriptors:
- DAP
- Hands-on Activities
- Informal Assessment

Corridor's mixed-age classes occur only in the afternoons. The classes center around the arts, computers, physical education, some science, and problem-solving through games. Corridor's mixed-age program enables younger and older students to feel good about each other, to help each other, and to allow for greater challenges for gifted students and greater help for the students who need help. The program creates a family atmosphere and is developmentally appropriate.

Corridor was charted through the alternative school movement in the 70's. A group of interested teachers and parents drafted the original proposal and presented it to the school board for approval. A minimal amount of money was budgeted by the district for start-up costs. The program has changed significantly since its inception, but the mixed-age classes in the afternoon have remained constant. Each teacher offers three elective classes which cover, on average, a three-week period. The teachers select the classes they wish to teach. Some of the classes are thematic, but all the classes utilize hands-on activities. Assessment is informal, and is based largely on finished products and student attitudes.

Parents can assist with electives, suggest ideas for electives, teach a class themselves, and assist their children in choosing classes. Brief descriptions of electives are available.

Visitors are welcome, but need to schedule a time and day with the school secretary.

Elmira Elementary
88960 Territorial
Elmira, OR 97437-9752
(503) 935-8214
District: Fern Ridge

Principal: Mary Jo Simone
School Size:
335 students
12 teachers
1 principal

Program Implemented: 1993-94
Program Descriptors:
- DAP
- Theme Teaching
- Whole Language
- The Writing Process
- Cooperative Learning
- Portfolios

Elmira implemented a mixed-age program in order to move to developmentally appropriate teaching, to create more "real life" situations in the classrooms, and to have teacher teams and theme teaching. Teachers received training in: whole language, the writing process, cooperative learning, and age-appropriate teaching. During the first year, 1992-93, there was one pilot group. During the second year there was a combination of mixed and straight grades. All mixed-age classrooms were in place by the third year. During all three years parents were kept informed, educated about the program, and provided input. All classes are implementing "open-ended" strategies in teaching to meet the needs of children at age

and developmental ranges. Portfolios are used for assessment reporting. Parent volunteers are encouraged and requested.

Visitors are welcome.

Howard Elementary
700 Howard Avenue
Eugene, OR 97404-2798
(503) 687-3365
District: Eugene

Principal: Greta Salmi
School Size:
383 students
17 teachers
1 principal

Program Implemented: September, 1992
Program Descriptors:

- DAP
- Integrated Curriculum
- Parent Volunteers

Howard Elementary implemented a mixed-age program because of differences in class enrollments and for their educational goals, which centered around developmentally appropriate practices, benefits of older and younger students working together, and advantages of keeping students and teachers together for two years. The faculty were intensively involved in studies, visits, inservices, readings, and discussions on concepts related to mixed-age programs. Teachers volunteered to be in the program and participated in collegial and collaborative planning. Evaluation and implementation of the program went hand-in-hand. Resources to support the teachers were obtained from grants for staff development, at-risk, 2020, and 21st Century. Many, many meetings and communications with parents occurred during a planning year followed by a pilot year. Howard is now in its second year of continued innovation.

First and second grades are mixed-aged in one class and second and third grades are mixed-aged in two classes. Teachers group students for skill instruction for part of the day, but students are heterogeneously grouped for all content areas other than language arts and math. Howard has integrated curriculum centered on three key themes a year for a two-year cycle. Basals, whole group and small group instructional strategies, and Chapter I assistance are within the classrooms.

All parents are informed about the program, and some are volunteers in the classes. Classroom observations of Howard's program are available with advance notice by contacting the principal to schedule dates for visitations.

Latham Elementary
32112 Latham Road
Cottage Grove, OR 97424-9399
(503) 942-0147
District: South Lane

Principal: Rich Brunaugh
School Size:
127 students
5 teachers
.5 principal

Program Implemented: September, 1993
Program Descriptors:

- Cooperative Learning
- Integrated Instruction
- Learning Centers
- Student-led Conferences
- Parent Volunteers

Latham Elementary implemented a mixed-age program in order to provide more age-appropriate experiences for children, and to implement HB 3565 and developmentally appropriate practices. A decision to have non-graded primary classrooms was based upon the size of the school and enrollment. First-second graders and second-third graders are mixed-aged in classrooms with an emphasis on DAP,

integration of curriculum, cooperative learning, student-led conferences, and learning centers. Parent volunteers are in all of the classrooms.

Still feeling "new" to the process, Latham faculty are glad to answer questions and are open to visitors.

London Elementary
72388 London Road
Cottage Grove, OR 97424-9299
(503) 942-0184
District: South Lane

Principal: Rich Brunaugh
School Size:
80 students
3 teachers
1 principal

Program Implemented: September, 1992
Program Descriptors:

- DAP
- Integrated Curriculum
- Student-led Conferences
- Inclusion Model
- Portfolio Assessment
- Whole Language
- Parent Volunteers
- School Site Council

Due to a reduction in staff, London Elementary brainstormed what they would like as their ideal school setting. The staff and the community strongly believed in HB 3565, DAP, OBE and the inclusion model. The staff attended many workshops, seminars, and inservice trainings to implement the various components of a mixed-age program; i.e., whole language, Terry Johnson, Lillian Katz, DAP, Project Approach, Hands-on Math and Science, Box It or Bag It, Hands-on Elementary Science (HOES), and OBE. Inservice training was also provided to the community and parents on how mixed-age classrooms would look and operate. Several Open House Nights were scheduled for the community and parents to share their concerns and get acquainted with each other. In addition, Curriculum Nights focusing on math, science, and language arts were held to share curriculum with the community.

London Elementary's mixed-age program is K-2 for five through seven year olds, 2-3 for seven through nine year olds, and 4-5 for nine through eleven year olds. Special needs children are provided with direct services from the classroom in a holistic approach. The focus of the program is on integrated curriculum, student-led group conferences, longitudinal assessment, and portfolios. Parents have constantly and consistently encouraged all phases of the program. Parents are involved in the School Site Council, Parent-Teacher Club, and London Bridges, a preschool that provides child care for parents serving as volunteers in the classroom and in the school.

Staff are available to share their ideas, organizational procedures in implementing mixed-age, management systems, and ways to utilize time more effectively for planning. Appointments with faculty can be scheduled with the office. Visitors are welcome and need to contact the office for an appointment.

Mohawk Elementary
91166 Sunderman Road
Springfield, OR 97478
(503) 744-6428
District: Springfield

Principal: Bruce Smolinisky
School Size:
113 students
5 teachers
1 principal

Program Implemented: September, 1993
Program Descriptors:

- Literature Approach
- Thematic Instruction
- School Site Council

- Student-led Conferences
- Parent Involvement

The decision to move to a mixed-age program at Mohawk was another step in a growth process the entire staff had been involved with for several years. The classroom teachers had learned, observed, and implemented concepts related to developmentally appropriate instructional practices, literature-based approaches to language arts, and cooperative learning techniques. These strategies were in self-contained, single grade classes. However, as staff learned more about these strategies, they realized how the strategies could benefit more students in multi-age settings. In the spring of 1992 there was preliminary discussion involving teachers and the principal about moving to multi-age grouping. The principal and staff met to discuss desired outcomes for the school and to form an action plan to achieve the desired outcomes and communicate with students and parents. The action plan included further education for faculty and parents by attending workshops and visitations to schools with multi-age programs in place. The principal secured funds for conferences and visitations by using district and building staff development moneys.

Work continued during the fall of 1992 and the spring of 1993. The action plan included four general parent meetings to share goals and benefits of multi-age classes. Parent sessions were held throughout the school year and featured language arts and math demonstrations for multi-age classes by teachers. There were continuing visitations and staff development sessions during the school year. Multi-age classes were implemented in the fall of 1993 as a K-1 blend, two 2-3 blends, and a 4-5 blend. The curriculum has been organized around major theme areas. Staff plan themes of high interest designed to achieve the outcomes specified by the district and the state CCG's. Lessons are "open ended," and students at different levels can work on the same topic at their own levels and paces. The school uses a literature-based approach to reading with few basal texts. Manipulatives are used in math instruction. Teachers report the skills, concepts and outcomes taught in each grading period.

Parents are involved in student led conferences—students and parents setting goals for the school year—and as volunteers in the classrooms. A PTA parent is volunteer coordinator. The coordinator compiles teacher needs and schedules and recruits parents and substitute volunteers. Parents are members of Mohawk's School Site Council. The Council is working with the community and the staff to set a school mission and develop a school profile in order to plan school improvement goals.

Visitors are welcome to observe in classes with at least one week advance notice.

Territorial Elementary
92609 Territorial Road
Junction City, OR 97448
(503) 998-8371
District: Junction City

Principal: Sally Angaran
School Size:
137 students
6 teachers
1 principal

Program Implemented: 1992-93
Program Descriptors:
- DAP
- Project Work
- Integrated Curriculum
- Process Writing
- Whole Language
- Site Council

The teachers at Territorial held a strong belief that student needs would be better met by a mixed-age program. The mixed-age program was a real blessing to the school in balancing class sizes. Parents received written materials about the program and a panel from a school with a mixed-age program presented information. However, there was minimal initial parent support for the program.

Developmentally appropriate practices, project work, integrated curriculum for math, social studies, science, and language arts, whole language, and process writing are components of the program.

Parents serve on the Site Council and were involved in parent meetings during the transition to mixed-age grouping.

Available resources include teachers who are willing to share information and a video of the first year of the program. Visitors are welcome, but need to call in advance.

Veneta Elementary
PO Box 370
Veneta, OR 97487-0370
(503) 935-8225
District: Fern Ridge

Principal: Ken Johnson
School Size:
325 students
12 teachers
1 principal

Program Implemented: 1993-94
Program Descriptors:

- Primary Level
- Integrated Curriculum
- Whole Language
- Portfolios
- Student-led Conferences
- Parent Volunteers

Through research, Veneta's original reason for implementing a mixed-age program was that it served as a better way for children to learn. However, with recent financial cuts, Veneta has discovered it is the only way to equalize class loads. All staff were involved in the decision to implement mixed-age grouping, and the School Council supported the decision. The principal made the assignments. The program is presently at the primary level. There are five first-second classrooms and four third-fourth classrooms. Curriculum is integrated throughout the program with an emphasis on whole language. State assessment, portfolios, and student-led conferences are the components of assessment. There is constant communication with parents, and they volunteer in the classrooms.

Resources are available upon request and visitors are welcome anytime.

LINCOLN COUNTY

Delake Elementary
540 N Highway 101
Lincoln City, OR 97367-3199
(503) 994-8191
District: Lincoln County

Principal: Mary Nelson
School Size:
260 students
14.5 teachers
1 principal

Program Implemented: 1991-92
Program Descriptors:

- DAP
- Integrated Thematic Instruction
- Whole Language
- Math Their Way
- Parent Volunteers

Delake originally had a first-second blended classroom years ago for a number of reasons. In 1991, the teacher was asked to keep her first graders for the next year as a step toward a mixed-age concept. During 1993-94, three teachers chose mixed-age classrooms, but one of the teachers transferred leaving two classrooms. The staff has researched, studied, and implemented ideas for the past two years. During 1992-93, the entire staff used Piaget as the focus of the study groups. For 1993-94, the study groups included assessment, cooperative learning, multiple intelligences, and emerging literacy. Each teacher visited at least two demonstration sites for developmentally appropriate practices. Teachers are changing how they teach as they become aware of changes and feel able to change. Curriculum varies with the classrooms. Themes and integration are used as much as possible. For assessment, Delake is piloting two district tools for math and literacy plus experimenting with portfolios. Instructional strategies include whole language, Math Their Way, Box It-Bag It, and open-ended problem solving. Parent volunteers are involved in the classrooms.

Shannon Shaffer is available as a resource to other schools implementing mixed-age programs.

LINN COUNTY

Harris School
31414 Harris Drive
Harrisburg, OR 97446-9721
(503) 995-6444
District: Harris

Principal: Polly Wilson
School Size:
21 students
2.5 teachers
1 principal

Program Implemented: 1940s
Program Descriptor:
- Integrated Curriculum

Harris School has always been a mixed-age program because it is a small rural school with grades K-8. The students are divided into two groups: the Little Room and the Big Room. All students switch classrooms for subjects. Every student works at a pace appropriate for the individual. The staff works closely to integrate the curriculum. There is tremendous communication between the school and the parents. The parents are very supportive of the school.

Visitors are welcome anytime, but advance notice is requested.

Oak Heights Elementary
605 Elm Street
Sweet Home, OR 97386-2097
(503) 367-7165
District: Sweet Home

Principal: Janice Sharp
School Size:
351 students
16 teachers
1 principal

Program Implemented: Fall, 1993
Program Descriptors:
- DAP
- Parent Volunteers

Oak Heights implemented a mixed-age program because they felt the benefits to students were worthwhile, the teachers had adequate training, and the parents expressed their support. The school was involved in research which included: participation in a district-level mixed-age committee, reading literature on mixed-age grouping and developmentally appropriate practices, and visitations to mixed-age programs at other schools. The school provided information to stake holders; i.e., reports to the board, the local school committee and parent-teacher council, copies of journal articles to parents, parent meetings with individuals and small groups, and phone calls to parents. A written survey was administered to parents to determine their support for mixed-age and developmentally appropriate practices. District staff development funds, 2020 grant moneys, and donated time, energy and enthusiasm were resources for implementation.

Five classrooms out of fourteen are mixed-age classes. The program consists of three classes of six-seven year olds, and two classes of eight-nine year olds. All teachers in the school are incorporating some elements of developmentally appropriate practices in their classrooms. Parent involvement is not different from the previous role of parents, and is consistent across the school.

Sample letters and surveys are available to other schools upon request. Visitors need to call the office to schedule a visit.

Tennessee Elementary
37575 Tennessee School Drive
Lebanon, OR 97355-9640
(503) 258-6637
District: Tennessee

Principal: Randy Bernstein
School Size:
94 students
5.5 teachers
1 principal

Program Implemented: About 1988
Program Descriptors:
- Split-Grade Classes
- K-1, 1-2 mixed

Tennessee Elementary had split-grade classes for many years, but moved to a mixed-age approach and philosophy about five years ago because "it made educational sense and was logistically easy." The school focused their attention on developmentally appropriate practices and enhancing interpersonal skills through mixed-age and cross-graded groupings. Teachers attended classes and workshops on DAP, non-graded primary, mixed-age groupings, and other related topics. The staff spearheaded the decision to move to mixed-age grouping and parents were educated about the approach. Parents and teachers continue to meet in order to plan, refine, and adjust.

Kindergarten through second grade shares two adjoining classrooms. First and second graders spread out in the mornings with some first graders working with second graders and a few second graders working with first graders for reading, language arts, and math. Kindergarten students arrive in the afternoon. Some afternoon activities are K-first and first-second while some are kindergarten-first-second. Other activities feature teams of students with each team representing kindergarten, first and second graders.

The faculty communicates weekly with parents and invite parents to volunteer in the classrooms. A few parents help directly with students while other parents support the program in other ways. Parents are actively involved in special school events and in a "read-at-home" program.

Tennessee School's teachers are available to speak with others about implementing a mixed-age program and have lists of resources to share. Visitors are welcome at any time with advance notice, if possible. Visitors must sign in and wear a visitor badge during the visit.

Waterloo Primary
8 Star (Waterloo)
Lebanon, OR 97355
(503) 457-8481
District: Crowfoot

Principal: Brynn Lawler Carter
School Size:
180 students
9 teachers
1 principal

Program Implemented: 1990-91
Program Descriptors:
- DAP
- Parent Volunteers
- Math Their Way
- Portfolios
- Whole Language
- School Council

During 1990-91, Waterloo Primary created a second year first grade in order to break down the time constraints around learning and permit more time for young children to grow developmentally. During 1993-94, two kindergarten-first classes were implemented to have developmentally appropriate learning. These classes were the result of the teachers and the principal designing and implementing two FOCUS meetings with parents to discuss mixed-age groupings. There were many communications through school newsletters and all staff were involved in the planning. Parents were given choices for class placements at the time of registration. The program has two kindergarten classes, one second-year first,

two kindergarten-first classes, and three second grade classes. Developmentally appropriate curriculum includes Math Their Way and whole language. Assessment includes portfolios, anecdotal individual student and class samplings, and two parent-teacher conferences a year. Parents are encouraged to be involved in the program as classroom helpers, Council members, and members of the Parent Club.

Available resources from Waterloo include planning materials and overheads, a brochure on the developmental description of children in the primary grades, and presentations by staff to explain developmental theory and the implications for curriculum.

Visitors simply need to call the school to arrange a visit.

MALHEUR COUNTY

Jordan Valley Elementary
PO Box 99
Jordan Valley, OR 97910
(503) 586-2213
District: Jordan Valley

Principal: Jack Crippen
School Size:
66 students
5 teachers
1 principal

Program Implemented: September, 1992
Program Descriptors:

- Portfolio Assessment
- Site Council
- Integrated & Thematic Curriculum

Jordan Valley started to consider a mixed-age program because of the fluctuation in class sizes. The faculty felt that the school's self-contained combined classrooms were not effective and made the transition to mixed-age classrooms. Discussion about mixed-age grouping started in September, 1991, after the legislature passed House Bill 3565. However, the Superintendent introduced the topic in June before HB 3565 was presented. Utilizing the information on mixed-age classrooms from the Northwest Lab, Jordan Valley's counselor presented the information to teachers, the administrator, and a small group of parents. Informal discussions continued among the teachers while formal discussions occurred with the teachers and the administrator. Teachers visited mixed-age classrooms in-state and out-of-state. Integrated mixed-age thematic units were presented in November and April of the 1992-93 school year. Mixed-age classrooms for this year consist of kindergarten, first-second, and fourth-fifth. Next year the program will include first-second, third-fourth, and fifth-sixth. Teachers are implementing portfolio assessment.

Parents were informed about the mixed-age program and were involved in planning for the program as members of the Site Council. Because of Jordan Valley's location, phone calls for program information are more feasible than visitations. However, visitors are welcome. If more than one or two people plan to visit, the school should be contacted in advance.

MARION COUNTY

Eugene Field School
410 N Water
Silverton, OR 97381-2137
(503) 873-6341
District: Silverton

Principal: Glenn Gelbrich
School Size:
542 students
32 teachers
1 principal

Program Implemented: 1992-93
Program Descriptors:
- Thematic Teaching
- Individualized Math & Reading Contracts

A small group of teachers at Eugene Field was interested in the mixed-age philosophy. Not all staff were supportive of a mixed-age program, but the school implemented a program. The process of implementation started with interested teachers visiting a model in Victoria, B.C., in October, 1992, and attending various workshops and classes on mixed-age grouping. A proposal was presented to the school board in January, 1993. With the school board's approval, presentations were made to interested parents during April. By June, there were enough enrolled children to make three classes, plus a waiting list. There are three classes of first-third graders of mixed abilities. Math and reading are individualized and thematic teaching is used. The mixed-age classes participate in school-wide assessments.

Parents are required to participate, and parent participation is emphasized in the program. Eugene Field will share free advice and individualized math contracts for computation skills. Visitors are not refused.

Morningside Elementary
3513 12th Street SE
Salem, OR 97302-2662
(503) 399-3173
District: Salem-Keizer

Principal: Jim Weil
School Size:
525 students
25 teachers
1 principal

Program Implemented: 1992-93
Program Descriptors:
- DAP
- Thematic Units
- Cooperative Groups
- Parent Volunteers

Morningside's staff survey indicated mixed support for building-wide implementation of a mixed-age program. As a result of a significant increase in first grade enrollments, the school went with primary team support and a teachers' initiative to start the first mixed-age classroom during the 1992-93 school year. For 1993-94, half of the primary classrooms were mixed-age classes. Five teachers are involved in a study group on developmentally appropriate practices and receive credit for their study. For 1994-95, mixed-age classes will include fourth-sixth grades. The initial implementation of the program was supported by release time with staff development funds from the district and the building. Teachers use their time outside of school to plan for their common themes. Duplicating moneys have been dedicated to copy thematic materials from Lewis-Clark and other sources. Budget cuts and class size increases have prompted additional mixed-age classrooms to manage growth. The district has prepared an "Elementary Program Philosophy-Strategy Guide" that supports developmentally appropriate practices and aligns with the district mission and goals.

The mixed-age program for 1994-95 will consist of: two first-second classes, one second-third class, and a probable fifth-sixth class. The program includes thematic units and cooperative groups. Only math instruction is at grade level for students.

Parent volunteers assist with computer instruction, reading and art. Parents provide feedback on the program. Parent orientations are held on the expectations of the program.

Resources are available by contacting Mimi Pileggi at Morningside. The school welcomes visitors with appointments. Visitor passes need to be obtained at the school.

Pratum Elementary
8995 Sunnyview Rd. NE
Salem, OR 97305-9550
(503) 362-8812
District: Pratum

Principal: Jim Hicks
School Size:
44 students
3 teachers
1 principal

Program Implemented: Has always been
Program Descriptors:
- Parent Volunteers
- Portfolios

Enrollment in the district, budget and design of the building have made Pratum a mixed-age program for as long as they can remember. Students work individually in a program that includes: kindergarten-second, third-fifth, and sixth-eighth. Most curricular areas are divided by grade or ability level. Social studies, health, physical education and science are "combined." Assessment includes portfolios, curriculum tests, and teacher-made tests. Parents have an active role. They provide transportation, volunteer in the classrooms, and financially support classroom programs.

Visitors are welcome, but need to call in advance in order to observe the classrooms.

Schirle Elementary
4875 Justice Way S
Salem, OR 97302-2299
(503) 399-3277
District: Salem-Keizer

Principal: Susan Lee
School Size:
650 students
24 teachers
1.5 principal

Program Implemented: 1991
Program Descriptors:
- Thematic Instruction
- DAP
- Portfolios
- Parent Volunteers

Initially, Schirle implemented one mixed-age class (a first-second in 1991) because of class size and a desire to teach a mixed-age versus a split class. The benefits of mixed-age classrooms were discussed and realized so more teachers became interested in teaching mixed-age classes by their own choice. In 1992-93, the school received a $7,000 grant to study developmentally appropriate practices and mixed-age grouping, and to educate parents about the benefits of DAP and mixed-age grouping. In 1993-94, there were two mixed-age first-second classrooms. Teachers and parents continued to be involved in service activities. Schirle's publication, "Parents and Teachers: PARTNERS in Education," helps keep parents informed of changes.

In each of the mixed-age first-second classrooms, there are approximately twenty-six children equally divided by gender and grade. The classrooms are "open" and students and teachers transition between classrooms for some activities. Thematic instruction, portfolios, and assessment based on expected skills and learning are incorporated in the mixed-age classrooms. There is an active parent volunteer program.

Available resources include copies of PARTNERS, materials from the parent lending library, and a data base for thematic instruction. Schirle welcomes visitors. Groups of visitors need to schedule their visits in advance. All visitors need to check in at the office.

Stayton Elementary
875 N Third
Stayton, OR 97383-1297
(503) 769-2336
District: Stayton

Principal: Mel McCutchen
School Size:
74 students
5 teachers
1 principal

Program Implemented: 1993-94
Program Descriptors:

- Inclusion Model
- Parent Involvement
- Whole Language
- Literature-based Reading
- DAP
- Active Learning

Three of Stayton's first grade teachers had used a whole language, literature-based program for several years. They realized the benefits of the program and felt that a "blended" environment would be the next natural step to implement. The principal was supportive, so teachers started the necessary planning to implement a mixed-age program. These teachers visited several mixed-age sites, asked questions, and got reactions from those experienced with mixed-age programs. After each visit, information was shared with students and parents through weekly newsletters. Interested parents were sent a form to make a student placement request. Teachers kept part of their first year students for a second year and added new first year students. The program was introduced as a pilot, but teachers asked for a two year commitment to implement the program. The teachers continued to educate themselves with summer classes. Class lists were compiled from the parent request forms. In September, a Parent Education Night was held to share program goals. Chapter One and the Basic Skills Program followed an inclusion model.

The first and second year students are "blended" into a class of independent students where each student works at his or her own developmentally appropriate level. The classrooms focus on active learning, where students help and challenge each other while learning the most from the classroom environment.

Stayton's program strives to instill in parents that they are their children's best models and teachers. Parents participate in the classrooms and Friday Folders, volunteer snacks, developing film, and donating wood and items for inventions.

Stayton is proud of their environment and loves to share what they've done.

Sumpter Elementary
525 Rockwood Drive SE
Salem, OR 97306-2209
(503) 399-3337
District: Salem-Keizer

Principal: Cathy Mink
School Size:
576 students
22 teachers
1 principal

Program Implemented: Fall, 1993
Program Descriptors:

- Portfolio Assessment
- Thematic Curriculum
- Parent Volunteer Program

Sumpter Elementary implemented a mixed-age program due to a reduction of staff and an interest to move toward mixed-age grouping. The primary team studied developmentally appropriate practices for a year, and faculty talked to other schools involved with mixed-age programs. The philosophy of the

program was communicated to parents. The program includes portfolio assessment, thematic curriculum, ad-hoc skill groups, and teacher planning sessions. Parents serve as volunteers and resources.

Wednesdays are "open door days." Visitors are welcome on those days.

Wright Elementary
4060 Lone Oak Road SE
Salem, OR 97302-5798
(503) 399-3190
District: Salem-Keizer

Principal: Bev Sevall
School Size:
442 students
23 teachers
1 principal

Program Implemented: 1992-93
Program Descriptors:

- DAP
- Integrated Thematic Instruction
- The Seven Intelligences
- Cooperative Learning
- Portfolios
- Student-led Conferences
- Literature-based Reading

Wright implemented a mixed-age program in order to better meet the needs of students, increase the continuity of programs, achieve greater stability, increase teaching time, develop a greater knowledge base of students, shift the instructional focus to students, provide an integrated and holistic approach to teaching, and increase the school's focus on cooperative teaching-learning strategies. In August, 1992, teachers voted to participate in mixed-age classrooms. The principal approved the model. In implementing the program for 1992-93, faculty agreed that mixed-age classrooms for grades three through six would help the school better meet the needs of the students. Because parents, teachers and staff were enthusiastic about the success of the mixed-age classrooms, the primary team made the decision to participate in the program for 1993-94. Thirteen of the fifteen classrooms in grades one through six are mixed-age classes. There is one self-contained first and second grade classroom to provide options for parents and teachers. Teachers share their strengths with other team members as they plan thematic units. The teachers focus their teaching on what students need to learn rather than covering topics in textbooks. Ongoing planning time for teachers was established as an important part of implementing the integrated curriculum. Teachers have taken college courses and are participating in an "Integrated Thematic Instruction" training with Susan Kovalick. Two hours of uninterrupted time for thematic instruction will be scheduled for 1994-95. Teachers and students work together for two years. Integrated thematic instruction includes the seven intelligences. Social studies has a focus on concepts, cultures, and economics through projects, reports, research, speaking, listening, and writing. Reading is literature-based with sustained silent reading and flexible grouping for skills. Math is hands-on learning, manipulative, problem-solving, and projects. Writing is integrated across the content areas. Assessment is integrated with student-led conferences, portfolios, projects and presentations, and self-teacher reflection.

Parents are kept informed through special meetings to exchange ideas as well as concerns. Parents, teachers, and students set learning goals together. Staff are available for presentations. Visitors need to call in advance to make arrangements to visit. Visitations are scheduled on an as-needed basis.

MULTNOMAH COUNTY

Boise-Eliot Elementary
620 N Fremont
Portland, OR 97227
(503) 280-6171
District: Portland

Principals: Betty Campbell and Eileen Isham
School Size:
700 students
28 teachers
2 principals

Program Implemented: 1991-92

See the editorial on the following page by Vicki Swartz, curriculum coordinator for Boise-Eliot, for the rationale for Boise-Eliot's mixed-age program. Vicki can be contacted for a phone interview about the program. Visitors are welcome, but need to call in advance so that only two visitors per room are scheduled.

Capitol Hill Elementary
8401 SW 17th
Portland, OR 97219
(503) 280-6303
District: Portland

Principal: Liz Head
School Size:
425 Students
18 teachers
1 principal

Program Implemented: September, 1993
Program Descriptor:
- Parent Volunteers

Capitol Hill implemented a mixed-age program because of the research on mixed-age grouping and because the mixed-age philosophy supports students' interests. Five teachers were involved in the planning and spent sixty hours in summer studying the research. There are three first-second classrooms and teacher team planning. Parents are involved in setting up the classrooms, developing curricular materials and volunteering in the classrooms.

Capitol Hill's resources are people who are willing to talk about their experiences. Visitors are welcome, but need to schedule appointments.

Clark Elementary
1231 SE 92nd Avenue
Portland, OR 97126
(503) 280-6130
District: Portland

Principal: Greg Jones
School Size:
500 students
20 teachers
1 principal

Program Implemented: 1992-93
Program Descriptor:
- Two-year Curriculum

After two years of study, visits to other schools, and teacher participation in workshops, Clark planned a two year curriculum with the district curriculum staff. In 1992-93 the program was implemented with three first-second classes and the following year there were seven such classes. Students stay with the same teacher for two years. Regular parent meetings are held to communicate policies.

Clark will share their two-year curriculum cycle. Visitors are welcome, but need to call the office to schedule a visitation.

THE OREGONIAN, THURSDAY, MARCH 11, 1993

Education's future may be in the past

by Vicki Swartz

Parents, educators, and community members alike have been jolted with the implications of House Bill 3565 -- the Katz education reorganization plan -- and its call for schools to implement "developmentally appropriate practices" and establish "nongraded primary" programs.

Why in the world would anyone deliberately want to mix students of different age levels?

Because Oregon is looking back at an education model that research shows holds promise for improvement in our elementary schools.

Multi-age grouping, which places children who are at least a year apart in age in the same classroom group, is also known by other names: heterogeneous, mixed-age, vertical, family, composite and blended groupings; also ungraded and nongraded classrooms. It is a deliberate mix of ages.

Historically, education around the world has been done in multi-age groupings since the beginning of time. Siblings were taught within their families and later in one-room schoolhouses. In the United States, this is how all students were educated well into the 1800s.

It was not until the last 100 years that students began to be divided up according to their birth dates. It was based on the assumption that students of the same chronological age would need the same lessons, skills and content at the same pace.

By placing these students together, it would save a lot of teacher planning time and energy, for whole-group instruction could replace what one-room schoolhouse teachers had been doing for years: looking at students individually, doing much small-group work and understanding many levels of skills and competencies so that all students could be helped along this continuum of growth, wherever they were, regardless of their age.

Unfortunately, this enormous shift in educational practice was based on a faulty notion. Children pass through stages of development at their own level and rate, and these do not always coincide with their age.

In fact, research from shows that within any straight-age class of students, there is a range of ability and development that is equivalent to the age being taught. So the average kindergarten class of 5-year-olds has a range of at least five years, the average group of third-graders has a range of at least eight years and the average class of fifth-graders has a breadth of ability spanning 10 years or more.

The move into educating children by age level had enormous implications on curriculum. It must have seemed logical to try to list everything important to be taught (an effort that in itself continues to be mind-boggling at best, especially since our information base is doubling every two years). Then it was as if our educational leaders took a giant Exacto knife and simply sliced up the curriculum into twelfths.

The assumption was that if the first-grade teacher taught her slice to her first-graders, and the second-grade teacher his slice to them when they reached second grade, and so on, with everyone teaching their chunk of skills and content, then the pieces would all add up to a "whole" -- the final product, a highly educated person.

After all, at the time our country was having great economic luck with the industrial model. Why not try it with our children? You build the car body in the first grade, add the windshield and wipers in the second, slap on doors and a trunk in the third, and by the end of the assembly line -- voila, a polished product!

In practice, single-age teaching became a type of tracking -- with every student being marched through the same

curriculum and the same skills at the same time. Teachers became specialists within their own grade-level curriculum without being required to meet student needs that were above or below their assigned grade level.

Unfortunately, the assembly-line model has not worked for our nation's youngsters. As we delve into finding fresh solutions to our current educational crisis, with unacceptable dropout rates and too many of our youngsters not reaching their potentials, we must begin to view learning horizontally along a continuum, rather than packaged grade by grade.

Children must be encouraged to move ahead regardless of the grade label of the work without fear of encroaching on the work of the next teacher. We must begin shifting away from the whole-group instruction/ tracking and consider flexible student groupings to better meet the enormous range of individual needs in our classrooms. We must acknowledge that children may progress faster in one year and more slowly in another.

Indeed, it is not multi-age grouping that is the newer, radical, revolutionary way of teaching. Our current practice is the newer, much more controversial approach -- which begs re-examination.

The multi-age grouping or non-graded concept relaxes the rigid, lock-step curriculum with its age-graded expectations, which are inappropriate for a large proportion of children. And this is what HB 3565 is trying to get us to do.

Vicki Swartz is curriculum coordinator for Boise-Eliot Elementary School in Northeast Portland and teaches courses in multi-age grouping at Portland State University.

Clinton Kelly Elementary
9030 SE Cooper Street
Portland, OR 97266
(503) 280-6350
District: Portland

Principal: Mary Beth Van Cleave
School Size:
486 students
21.5 teachers
1 principal

Program Implemented: 1993-94
Program Descriptors:

- DAP
- Thematic, Project, Integrated Curriculum
- Narrative Assessment
- Primary and Intermediate Levels
- Multiple Intelligences

Kelly School had been implementing developmentally appropriate practices for five years, so moving to mixed-age classrooms was an inevitable step in the process. All teachers were familiar with DAP and the majority supported the philosophy. Three years ago, most teachers decided to stay with their classes for two years, and discovered the pleasures of developing long-term relationships with their students and parents. They also learned the commonalties of curriculum across grades. Last winter all the primary teachers agreed to "plunge" into mixed-age classes for this year. The faculty spent several release days planning with a curriculum specialist, attending numerous classes and workshops, and developing a two-year master plan. Planning on their own continued through the summer months.

Kelly has six mixed-age primary classrooms of first and second graders, two mixed-age intermediate classrooms of third, fourth and fifth graders, three classrooms where teachers stay with their students for two years, and three "singleton" classes. The curriculum is largely thematic, project-based, and integrated. The school is studying multiple intelligences research for intermediate instruction. The primary classes have moved to narrative assessment and intermediate teachers are currently revising their report cards.

Kelly held many meetings to involve parents in the spring and the fall. The response has been overwhelmingly positive. The school will share their booklet, "We are a Family of Learners," which describes the mixed-age program, community connections, family involvement initiatives, and enrichment and esteem-building activities. Please contact Kelly for the booklet and to schedule a visit. Kelly will schedule visitations after finding out the interests and objectives of visitors. Visitors have the opportunity to view the entire program and to visit classrooms and have their questions answered.

Hollydale Elementary
505 SW Birdsdale Avenue
Gresham, OR 97080-6799
(503) 661-6226
District: Gresham

Principal: Jan Baxter
School Size:
550 students
29 teachers
1 principal

Program Implemented: 1993-94
Program Descriptors:

- DAP
- Thematic & Integrated Curriculum
- Performance & Portfolio Assessment
- Site Council
- Parent Volunteers

Fourteen years ago when Hollydale opened, the original philosophy included a mixed-aged component. During the following years there were varying attempts at mixed-age groupings. HB 3565 caused Hollydale to revisit their initial philosophy and explore more extensively ways of establishing multi-age classrooms. The most important element in establishing mixed-age groupings was a focus on creating a centered school which placed priority on working with students at their appropriate developmental levels.

The staff participated in developmentally appropriate practices trainings for five years. The trainings included building inservices, study groups, exchanges with educators from England and Scotland, investigations of British curricula, techniques for integrating curriculum, and team teaching situations. In the last two years there have been more intensive studies of mixed-age groups and DAP. The School Site Council organized a series of speakers and visitations and surveyed the staff on mixed-age groupings. Those ready to participate were encouraged and supported. The school's vision statement was examined again, and included a staff focus on guidelines to support all grade configurations.

There are ten certified staff in mixed-age team teaching pods. The pods are: two teams of first-second grade, one team of third-fourth grade, one team of fourth-fifth grade, and one team of third-fourth-fifth grade. Eight certified staff are in conventional team teaching pods and there are three self-contained kindergarten classes. The curriculum focus for all the classes is developmentally appropriate practices. Mixed-age groups tend to use more integrated learning and theming. The school is in the early stage of using performance assessment and portfolios.

Parents are an essential element of the school's decision-making process. Parents serve on the Site Council and participate as volunteers. The parent organization is active in gathering and providing input about the program. In addition to monthly scheduled informational parent meetings, parents receive curriculum information through the school's newsletters. Parents are instrumental in the placement of their children in mixed-age classes.

Please contact the school's office to schedule a visit. The school would like to know specifically what visitors want to observe. Visitations will not be scheduled during busy times of the year or in June.

Hollyrood Elementary
3560 NE Hollyrood Court
Portland, OR 97212
(503) 284-6766
District: Portland

Principal: Margaret Dey
School Size:
50 students
2 teachers
1 principal

Program Implemented: 1993
Program Descriptors:
- Primary Level
- Literacy Center

Hollyrood had two teachers that wanted to start a first-second mixed-age language arts program to determine what strategies and activities work best for students. These teachers enrolled in a summer mixed-age class and requested special scheduling of the school's support staff in order to implement their program. The teachers co-teach 50 first-second blended classes for daily literacy center time. Small groups rotate through music, library, and physical education activities to reduce group size so that the teachers can manage small group instruction and direct instruction.

Lent Elementary
5105 SE 97th Avenue
Portland, OR 97266
(503) 280-6322
District: Portland

Principal: Paul Steger
School Size:
400 students
18 teachers
1 principal

Program Implemented: 1992-93
Program Descriptors:
- School Council
- Portfolios
- DAP

Lent Elementary implemented their mixed-age program because "it appears to be developmentally appropriate for children and the human species," and allowed the school greater flexibility in arranging

students among the grades. The new principal in the school shared the idea of mixed-aged grouping and House Bill 3565. Student enrollment at the beginning of a school year plus a teacher volunteer created the first mixed-age classroom. The following year several other teachers volunteered, so there are now five classrooms with various combinations of first through fifth grades. There are two classes of first-third, one class of third-fourth, and two classes of fourth-fifth. The general curriculum is based on developmentally appropriate practices with portfolios. Instructional strategies are moving towards child-centered growth and curriculum.

Parents are members of the School Council and are involved in classroom and school activities. Teachers in the mixed-age program are available as resources. Visitors are welcome with advance notice and check-in at the office.

Lincoln Park Elementary
13200 SE Lincoln Street
Portland, OR 97233
(503) 256-6504
District: David Douglas

Principal: Doug Sharp
School Size:
501 students
29 teachers
1 principal

Program Implemented: September, 1993
Program Descriptors:

- DAP
- Thematic Units
- Inclusion
- Curriculum Integration
- Whole Language
- Mixed-ability Literature Groups
- Portfolios

After spending two years studying developmentally appropriate practices and many visitations to schools with mixed-age classrooms, Lincoln Park agreed with the philosophy of mixed-age grouping. The staff believed their students would benefit from bonding with teachers for two years, a non-competitive environment, older students helping younger students, and a sense of companionship. Likewise, they felt parents would feel more comfortable with the same teacher for two years. The school believed in child-centered learning and developing the "whole child" while not forcing students through a "grade level" curriculum. Teachers were involved in reading and classes on developmentally appropriate practices, mixed-age grouping, inclusion, and assessment.

During the spring months the staff started by mixing ages for various activities; i.e., buddy reading, language arts, and writing. The staff wrote a proposal to provide four mixed-age classrooms (two first-seconds and two second-thirds) and four regular classrooms (two first grades and two second grades). The proposal was approved by the administration and parent meetings were held in the spring. Parents were given the option of selecting the type of classroom to meet their children's needs. The remaining eight classrooms were balanced to provide children of all ability levels. Teachers spent many hours collaborating over the summer and into the school year.

The program uses whole language, mixed-ability literature groups, integrated themes, some whole group math lessons and some small groups for concept instruction. There is a standard report card, but also portfolios and other methods of assessment. Teachers work in teams.

A few parents are involved in volunteering in the program, but their involvement drops off late in the year. Resources are not available at this time and visitors are not encouraged.

Lynch View Elementary
1546 SE 169th Place
Portland, OR 97233-4499
(503) 251-2203
District: Centennial

Principal: Susan Coady
School Size:
540 students
25 teachers
1 principal

Program Implemented: 1991
Program Descriptors:

- DAP
- Whole Language
- Science Kits
- Portfolio Assessment
- Parent Volunteers

Lynch View implemented a mixed-age program to meet the needs of students more effectively, facilitate learning at the individual level, and help learners move in a continuum of learning steps rather than lock-step curriculum. Developmentally appropriate practices were seen as the appropriate model to achieve these goals. Five teachers piloted mixed-age groups in 1991-92 and the following year. The whole staff agreed to move toward mixed-age groups in the 1993-94 school year. The first two years of the program were supported by a non-graded primary grant of $10,000 from the Oregon Department of Education. District support included summer work time for faculty and early release time on Wednesdays for all staff to use for planning. In 1993-94, Lynch View received the State Schools for the 21st Century Grant to support further staff development.

Kindergarten is a straight grade since it is half-time. Primary classes include first-second and first-second-third. Middle grades are third-fourth and intermediate grades are fifth-sixth. Portfolio assessment, whole language, science kits and math conceptual development are widely used.

Parents participate as volunteers with training offered two to three times per year. Parents attend goal-setting conferences and spring goal evaluation conferences. Parents also serve on committees and help in planning programs.

Lynch View is developing curriculum plans and benchmarks for the primary, middle and intermediate levels as resources to be shared. Visitors have been discouraged during 1992-93 as Lynch View is in the middle of a bond-funded remodeling project. At other times, visitors are welcome on Wednesdays. Pre-visitation information and questions are appreciated, so visitors need to contact the school beforehand.

Menlo Park Elementary
12900 NE Glisan
Portland, OR 97230
(503) 256-6506
District: David Douglas

Principal: Ruth Wick
School Size:
514 students
24 teachers
1 principal

Program Implemented: Fall, 1993
Program Descriptors:

- Portfolios
- Parent Volunteers

Menlo Park Elementary believed a mixed-age program was a positive step and an additional strategy for helping build student's self-esteem. In order to implement a mixed-age program, Menlo Park investigated programs, researched, started implementing practices within traditional classrooms, and began one re-configured class in the fall, of 1992. Four more mixed-age classes were added the following fall. The staff continued to learn about grouping, assessment, teaching strategies and specific issues related to mixed-age groupings. Teachers made visitations to other schools, attended classes, conferences and workshops, and will continue to receive training.

Curriculum decisions are guided by the established Essential Learning Skills and the Common Curriculum Goals. Student interests and teacher and parent input are used to make decisions about curriculum. Individual student progress is monitored through teacher observation, daily assignments, projects, testing, and student self-evaluation. There has been an increased emphasis on portfolios. Parents and students are surveyed in order to determine if the program is effective. Parents are actively involved in the volunteer program.

Menlo Park is open to visitors. They will share their prepared materials and are available to do presentations.

Rose City Park Elementary
2334 NE 57th Avenue
Portland, OR 97123
(503) 280-6166
District: Portland

Principal: Dr. Ed Bettencourt
School Size:
650 students
40 teachers
2 principals

Program Implemented: Fall, 1993
Program Descriptor:
- Primary Level

During 1992-93, three teachers at Rose City Park formed a team and approached their administration wanting to implement a mixed-age program. That year the team studied research on mixed-age grouping, visited other sites, attended workshops, and developed plans to implement a program for three primary classes in the fall of 1993. Parents were notified of the new program and parent information sessions were held. The three primary classes include two first-second mixed-age classes and one second-third. The students stay with the same teacher for two years.

Parent involvement is not highly structured at this point in the program. Faculty are available as resources to other schools. Visitors should contact the office to schedule an appointment to visit.

Woodstock Elementary
5601 SE 50th Avenue
Portland, OR 97206
(503) 280-6380
District: Portland

Principal: Dianna Hanlon
School Size:
430 students
19 teachers
1 principal

Program Implemented: Fall, 1993
Program Descriptors:
- Primary Level
- Parent Volunteers

Woodstock implemented a mixed-age program in order "to assist in the process of institutionalization of developmentally appropriate practices at grades first and second." Kindergarten, first and second grade teachers established a study group for the 1992-93 school year. They researched developmentally appropriate practices, visited school sites, and generated options for restructuring. Parents were invited to these meetings. Planning for the new structure was started in March of 1993. There are six sections of mixed-age students from first and second grades. Curriculum has been written for a two year content rotation. Instructional strategies include exploration, direct instruction, and practice. Parents are invited to participate in all aspects of the program. Many parents volunteer.

All visitations must be scheduled in advance with the principal.

POLK COUNTY

Monmouth Elementary
958 E Church Street
Monmouth, OR 97361-1699
(503) 838-1433
District: Central

Principal: Richard Beight
School Size:
570 students
26 teachers
1 principal

Program Implemented: 1993-94
Program Descriptors:
- Cooperative Projects
- Parent Volunteers

Monmouth implemented mixed-age grouping because research indicated that a variety of developmental and educational benefits could result. Study groups of interested teachers were formed, and read, visited other schools, attended workshops, and shared ideas. There are four mixed-age classrooms out of twenty-two; i.e., first-second, second-third, and third-fourth. Curriculum has been modified to provide a variety of activities in which students work cooperatively on projects and other activities. Informational meetings with parents were held and parents serve as volunteers in the classrooms.

Visitors are welcome and need to make arrangements in advance.

Oak Grove School
2700 Oak Grove Road
Rickreall, OR 97371-9705
(503) 362-3345
District: Central

Principal: Judy Isaarson
Emily Breeden (contact)
School Size:
32 students
2.5 teachers
.5 principal

Program Implemented: Always Been
Program Descriptors:
- Whole Language
- Reading & Writing Workshops
- Concept-based Math
- Parent Volunteers

Oak Grove is a small rural school that has always done mixed-age grouping. Teachers look for opportunities to share students between classrooms; i.e., primary (first-second) join intermediate (third-fifth) and vice versa, depending on the activities. There has been administrative and parent support. The curriculum is "shuffled" by years. Whole language, reading and writing workshops, and concept-based math are incorporated.

Oak Grove has parent volunteers and feels generally supported by parents. Visitors are welcome as long as they call in advance.

Perrydale Elementary
7445 Perrydale
Amity, OR 97101-9725
(503) 623-2040
District: Perrydale

Principal: Tim Adsit (also superintendent)
School Size:
282 students
22 teachers
1 principal

Program Implemented: October, 1993
Program Descriptors:
- Thematic Instruction
- Parent Volunteers

Perrydale implemented a mixed-age program because of HB 3565. Primary teachers were given a day in June, 1993, for the purpose of working on the implementation of mixed-age classrooms. These teachers had previously attended a workshop by teachers who had implemented mixed-age classrooms. Themes were developed and the decision was made to start the program in October, 1993, so the summer months could be used for planning. For fifty minutes, four days a week, first-third are mixed balancing gender. Siblings are not mixed. Each teacher has about seventeen students. Films, guest speakers and field trips are used to immerse students in the themes. Each teacher is free to present any materials in any way as long as it is appropriate for the monthly theme.

Parents are invited to an informational meeting about mixed-age grouping and are used as speakers and assistants in the classrooms.

Perrydale will share thematic files on: animals, native Americans, Christmas around the world, weather, famous people, insects, plants and oceans.

The school is open to observations and visitors, especially if called in advance.

UMATILLA COUNTY

Athena Elementary School
PO Box 510
Wildhorse Road
Athena, OR 97813-0510
(503) 566-3581
District: Athena-Weston

Principal: Dan Clark
School Size:
200 students
9 teachers
1 principal

Program Implemented: 1992-93
Program Descriptor:
- Site Council

Athena implemented a mixed-age program as an experiment in order to determine if the concept helped students. Primary level teachers liked the concept, and intermediate teachers were encouraged to implement the program, also. The district has instituted inservice activities during the last two years to prepare teachers. The school board has provided planning time, teachers have studied the concept independently, and site councils and parent support groups have been established. Athena has been successful with OTE, 2020 and Implementation grants. Athena will be ready to implement a total school multi-age program in the fall of 1994.

Ferndale Elementary
Route 3, Box 179
Milton-Freewater, OR 97862-9715
(503) 938-5412
District: Ferndale

Principal: Bill Keyser
School Size:
232 students
9 teachers
1 principal

Program Implemented: September, 1993
Program Descriptors:
- DAP
- Parents as Partners
- Student-led Conferences

Staff reduction prompted Ferndale to implement a mixed-age program earlier than intended. However, the school was working toward implementing developmentally appropriate practices by 1994-95. Three teachers volunteered, attended workshops, and visited other schools. Two open meetings were held to discuss the positive aspects of a developmentally appropriate program. The issue was discussed regularly at teacher meetings and several information letters were sent to parents. Three classes were created with students from interested parents. Monthly meetings evaluated the progress of the program. The classes are: first-second, third-fourth, and fifth-sixth. Grade levels served as the placement guideline initially, but the intent is to have homogeneous groups.

Parents are active partners. They participate in student-led conferences. Weekly communication is maintained with parents and feedback is solicited from parents.

The three teachers involved in the program are available as presenters. Visitors need to contact the school in advance.

Helix Elementary
PO Box 398
Helix, OR 97835-0398
(503) 457-2315
District: Helix

Principal: Don Parkin
School Size:
139 students (K-12)
11.5 teachers
1 principal

Program Implemented: 1993-94

Program Descriptors:
- Performance-based Assessment
- DAP

Helix implemented a mixed-age program because of House Bill 3565, a reduction in staff, and a desire to be current in educational practices. Helix applied for and received a 2020 grant in the spring of 1992. During 1991-92 and 1992-93 the school researched the topic, attended workshops, and visited schools. In the summer of 1993, the program was established. There are two classes of kindergarten-first and two classes of second-third, with one teacher in each class. Curriculum is based on the state's common curriculum goals and the essential learning skills. Assessment is performance-based. Strategies for instruction include an eclectic approach, developmentally appropriate practices, traditional, whole group and small groups. Since most parents work during the day, they are only asked to participate in the evenings with their children.

Helix is not ready for visitors as they are in the early stages of implementing their program.

Ukiah Elementary
PO Box 218
Ukiah, OR 97880-0218
(503) 427-3431
District: Ukiah

Principal: Frank Odegard
School Size:
47 students
7 teachers
1 principal

Program Implemented: Years ago
Program Descriptors:
- Parent Volunteers
- Integrated Curriculum
- K-12 Program

Ukiah has had a mixed-age program for many years since it is a small school with K-12 all in one building. Over the last ten years staff have been sharing their expertise of knowledge at any grade level where there has been a need. For example, high school teachers have taught elementary P.E., music, writer's workshop, and computers. Elementary teachers cross-grade taught or worked collaboratively on school projects. The same textbook series are used across K-12 in order to establish continuity across the school. Textbooks are used as a resource in addition to other materials.

Mixed-age classes are K-first, second-third, fourth-fifth, sixth-eighth, and ninth-twelfth. Students are together at the junior and senior high levels for student body activities. Students K-12 participate in pep assemblies, theme studies and other appropriate assemblies; i.e., OMSI presentations and the Missoula Children's Theater Musical each year. Field trips, read-a-thons, Christmas programs, and writer's workshops are also K-12. Students may be reorganized as K-third, first-third, K-fifth, K-second or third-fifth depending on the activities or the themes. The district is exploring portfolios as a tracking and assessment strategy.

Parents are encouraged to spend time in the classrooms as observers, volunteer assistants, chaperones for field trips, or for class activities. Parents are also involved in site-based committees to deal with school improvement activities and Chapter II funds. Parent-teacher conferences are scheduled twice a year or as needed. The library is open to the public one night a week and parents participate in Author Parties and Awards Nights.

Staff members are willing to share their experiences and books and materials they use in their classrooms. Visitors need to schedule appointments in advance and check in with the office upon arrival. There is no school on Friday afternoons.

UNION COUNTY

Ackerman Laboratory School
1410 "L" Avenue
LaGrande, OR 97850
(503) 963-9786
District: LaGrande

Principal: Dr. Barbara Fabert
School Size:
200 students
10 teachers
1 principal

Program Implemented: September, 1993
Program Descriptors:

- Early Entry—five-year-olds
- Primary, Intermediate and Upper Levels
- School Council
- Integrated & Thematic Curriculum
- Portfolio Assessment
- Parent Center

Ackerman Laboratory School is one of two model schools in the "Regional Consortium for Non-Graded Elementary Schools." All faculty, staff, including faculty from Union Educational Service District and the School of Education, and parents were intensively involved in a year long restructuring process during 1991-92 in preparation for implementing a comprehensive multi-age program for 1992-93 following the recommendations outlined in House Bill 3565, the Katz Bill. The restructuring process focused on the recommendations of various committees forming Ackerman's 21st Century Schools Project; i.e., student placement, curriculum, assessment, parent and community relations, special education, library and media. The recommendations from each committee went to the 21st Century School Council comprised of six faculty, five parents, one classified staff, and the administrator. Throughout the planning year parents and faculty visited existing multi-age programs within the state and in the region, attended workshops and conferences to gain new knowledge and skills, did extensive reading and research, and started a resource library. All committee members read Goodlad and Anderson's book, The Non-Graded Elementary School (revised edition).

Ackerman's Multi-Age Program has three levels: primary for five and six year olds, intermediate for seven, eight, and nine year olds, and upper for ten and eleven year olds. There is early entry for the five year olds. The primary program is an all-day program. The multi-age program is built on five foundational goals: intellectual development, physical development and well-being, emotional and social development, social responsibility, and aesthetic and artistic development. The curriculum is integrated, thematic, and project oriented. Assessment is based on continuous progress, electronic portfolios, student analysis and multi-dimensional methods. Parents are an integral part of the program and collaborate with teachers on the Parent Support Group Board, the Level Parent Councils and the 21st Century School Council. The Parent Support Group Board promotes a school-home partnership by: establishing and coordinating parent volunteer programs, promoting home learning, providing parent education, encouraging parent advocacy, promoting parent involvement in school governance, and raising funds for learning opportunities and instructional materials.

Visitation days are the first Tuesday and the third Wednesday, October through May. Visitors should contact the school to complete a visitor survey. The visitor fee is $20 per person for a resource guide.

Grande Ronde Child Center
902 "D" Street
LaGrande, OR 97850
(503) 963-8666
District: LaGrande

Principal: Cindy Stenard
School Size:
12 students
1 teacher
1 principal

Program Implemented: 1972
Program Descriptors:

- Parent Involvement
- Individualized Instruction

Grande Ronde Child Center serves twelve seriously emotionally disturbed children ages 4-12 years old in a program providing individual, group and family therapy integrated with an academic program. Each child has an IEP-PEP and an individual treatment plan. The nature of the Center's program is mixed-age and individualized. The academic program was developed in cooperation with the ESD, school district principals, diagnosticians, speech, language and mental health counselors.

Parents are required to participate actively in assessment, developing plans, evaluating progress and the like. Children are placed at Grand Ronde Child Center by their parents or legal guardians because of their treatment needs, not because of their educational needs.

Visitors need to schedule visits to tour the facility under staff supervision. When possible, visitors are encouraged to come when no children are at the Center.

WASCO COUNTY

Joseph G. Wilson Elementary
1413 E 12th Street
The Dalles, OR 97058
(503) 296-5428
District: The Dalles

Principal: Jerry Christensen
School Size:
290 students
12 teachers
1 principal

Program Implemented: 1992-93
Program Descriptors:

- DAP
- Thematic Units
- Inclusion
- Curriculum Integration
- Portfolios
- Parent Volunteers
- Parent Teacher Club

Joseph G. Wilson was moving to full inclusion of all students in the regular classroom program. The faculty researched the needs the new students would have that the regular classrooms didn't address. Then they studied what changes could be made to prepare the school to meet these needs. During the period between 1989 and 1992, the school discovered it wasn't meeting the individual needs of the students presently enrolled, and needed to implement curriculum and grouping of students at all developmental levels. During 1990-91, a team was formed of interested staff from each level and the principal. The team researched curriculum and instructional strategies to meet the needs of all students. The team attended conferences and workshops, took classes, and visited other schools from 1990 to the present. The team conducted inservice and staff development sessions with the rest of the faculty from 1990-93. The faculty integrated subjects into thematic unit planning during 1991-92. During that year, it was concluded that mixed-age classrooms would be the best way to insure students better learning opportunities. All teachers visited a classroom which had the mixed-age level they would be teaching. Several informational parent meetings were held during April, May and June of that year. A request for permission to implement mixed-age classes for the 1992-93 school year went to the school board in April. In June the board gave their support; parents also did the same. The parent group paid for staff to attend a Thematic Unit Curriculum Development Workshop with Roger Taylor in June, 1992.

Students are evaluated on the growth and achievements made from one reporting period to the next. Student growth and achievements are shared at two different conferences scheduled during the fall and spring of the school year. Student sample work is kept in portfolios.

Parents are involved as volunteers. Parent meetings keep them informed of school events, Open House, and the program. The school has an active Parent Teacher Club.

Resources are available during visitations. Interested visitors need to contact the principal.

Mosier Elementary
1204 First
Mosier, OR 97040
(503) 493-3253
District: Chenowith

Principal: Marilynn Shaw
School Size:
121 students
6 teachers
1 principal

Program Implemented: 1993-94
Program Descriptor:

- Project Centers

Mosier was motivated by House Bill 3565 and the abundance of literature that supports the mixed-age philosophy. As a small school, Mosier wanted the opportunity to implement team teaching and split certain groups of students since there was only one classroom per grade. The school felt that students

would be more cooperative in a mixed-age program. Mosier conducted school visitations, participated in a training session with Sue Carter from the Oregon Department of Education, created time for reading, studying, planning and discussions, attended workshops, and held parent meetings.

Mosier's mixed-age program includes one kindergarten, two first-second classrooms, two third-fifth classrooms, and one fourth-fifth classroom. The school is using fifth grade topics the first year with the third-fifth grade class and the fourth-fifth grade class. Math, reading and language arts are individualized. Science, health, and social studies are project centers.

Parents have been partners and helpers, but some have been very critical and want the program to return to its previous format. Mosier welcomes visitors, but visitors need to call the principal to make an appointment.

WASHINGTON COUNTY

Greenway Elementary
9150 SW Downing Drive
Beaverton, OR 97005
(503) 591-4520
District: Beaverton

Principal: Candace Stevens
School Size:
260 students
10 teachers
1 principal

Program Implemented: 1992-93
Program Descriptors:

- Parent Advisory Council
- DAP
- Thematic Approach
- Integrated Curriculum
- Portfolio Assessment
- Narratives
- Anecdotal Records

Greenway had a group of teachers who were very interested in mixed-age grouping, and a principal who was supportive. The staff had done extensive reading and had attended several workshops on multi-age grouping and developmentally appropriate practices. The district had a pilot program. Greenway wrote a proposal which forced them to go through the process of identifying the players, the resources, and the like. The faculty met with parents several times, formed a parent advisory group and have continued to involve parents. One teacher also serves on the district team to help plan the inservice program for the twenty-two pilot teachers. A great deal of time was spent preparing the school, the staff, the parents, and the community.

There are three first-second classes, four second-third classes, two fourth-fifth classes, and one fifth-sixth class. Developmentally appropriate practices form the school's "umbrella" with a thematic approach and integrated curriculum. Students have choices in their learning. Portfolio assessment, narratives, and anecdotal records are used in the program.

The program is based on a three-way partnership among parents, teachers, and students. Parents on the Advisory Council meet with the principal and teachers in order to provide feedback and share ideas. Parents are always asked to participate in goal setting and goal assessment.

Available resources from Greenway include copies of their reporting tools, their philosophy statement, and the school brochure. Visitors need to call for an appointment.

Groner Elementary
23405 SW Scholls Ferry Road
Hillsboro, OR 97123
(503) 628-1131
District: Groner

Principal: Thermon Striplin
School Size:
250 students
14 teachers
1 principal

Program Implemented: 1993-94
Program Descriptors:

- DAP
- Cooperative Learning
- Hands-on Science
- Literature-based Reading
- Themes and Projects
- Parent Involvement

Economics dictated that Groner implement a mixed-age program as well as a philosophical movement toward child-centered and developmentally appropriate classrooms. Teachers visited other schools and attended workshops for two to three years in preparation for the program. Developmentally appropriate

practices, literature-base reading, cooperative learning, and hands-on science were adopted in classrooms before the transition. The program is organized as follows: second-third, third-fourth, fourth-fifth, and fifth-sixth. Curriculum is on a two-year cycle with themes and projects.

Parents are tutors and assistants in the classrooms. Visitors need to call and make arrangements to visit.

Lenox Elementary
21200 NW Rock Creek Boulevard
Portland, OR 97229
(503) 645-4409
District: West Union

Principal: Cliff Tetreault
School Size:
410 students
24 teachers
1 principal

Program Implemented: Fall, 1993
Program Descriptors:

- Parent Volunteers
- Literature-based
- Process Writing
- Student-led Conferences
- Portfolios

Lenox had several staff members who wanted to implement mixed-age classes and were philosophically and academically prepared to use the methods and materials needed to do mixed-age grouping successfully. Because the school was reducing the number of teachers, making the transition to mixed-age classes would give the school more flexibility in grouping students. Initially, Lenox wanted to have three mixed-age classes of fourth-fifth, but ended up with only one. There was not enough parent support, especially among fifth-grade parents. Reading materials were sent to parents, parent meetings were held, and speakers did presentations related to mixed-age grouping. After school started in 1993-94, a mixed-age kindergarten-first class was created to alleviate crowding in the first grades.

There is an even balance of fourth and fifth graders in the fourth-fifth mixed class. The science, health, and social studies curricula in the fourth-fifth mixed-age and fourth and fifth grade classrooms are on a two-year cycle. The language arts curriculum is integrated. Reading is literature-based with student self-selection of books. Writing as a process is taught. Students are grouped for math. There is ongoing assessment. Student-led conferences with parents are held in the spring to review student portfolios. Kindergarten students in the kindergarten-first mixed-age classroom stay half the day so the teacher has only first graders in the afternoons.

Teachers use parent volunteers, and parents are welcome to visit. Teachers send home a regular newsletter. Parents agree to student placement in the program.

Lenox has a collection of print materials on mixed-age classes available to other schools. Visitors are most welcome. but need to call in advance.

Rock Creek Elementary
4125 NW 185th Street
Portland, OR 97229
(503) 591-4534
District: Beaverton

Principal: Dorothy Danner
School Size:
460 students
18 teachers
1 principal

Program Implemented: 1991-92
Program Descriptors:

- DAP
- Thematic Units
- Centers

- Flexible Groupings
- Parent Training

Rock Creek implemented a mixed-age program in order to provide an alternate opportunity of learning for children. They started with one teacher who was interested in developmentally appropriate practices and taught a first-second combination three years ago. This teacher went to several classes during the summer, and with a supportive parent group, implemented the program. The following year, 1991-92, the district requested pilot project proposals for mixed-age grouping. A second teacher was added to the first-second mixed-age class. During 1992-93, a third teacher was added, and a fourth teacher joined the program this year. The four teachers in the program work as a team to plan thematic units, and to infuse essential learning skills and common curriculum goals into developmentally appropriate practices. Students move into center areas several times each week, work in writers' workshop and other content-specific areas. This year three teachers share 77 students in the third-fourth mixed-age group. The teachers have three "atmospheres" in three classes, and meet with students in mixed-age groups, ability groups, interest groups, and other flexible groupings.

Parents met to get information and share concerns about the philosophy of mixed-age grouping the spring before the mixed-age program started. Parents assist daily in the each of the classrooms. Parent training sessions are held in the fall.

Visitors are welcome and visitations need to be scheduled a week or two in advance.

YAMHILL COUNTY

Columbus Elementary
1100 S Cypress
McMinnville, OR 97128
(503) 472-5313
District: McMinnville

Principal: Bruce Waltz
School Size:
189 students
15 teachers
1 principal

Program Implemented: September, 1993
Program Descriptors:

- School Wide Themes
- Blended Instruction
- Student-centered Assessment
- Portfolios
- School Site Council
- Parent Involvement

Columbus Elementary implemented a mixed-age program as a result of district expectations, school improvement, site-based leadership, a philosophical change, and House Bill 3565. The "players" for Columbus were their School Site Council, parents, and a Multi-age Task Force. Implementation activities included research study, parent meetings, school site visits, inservices, staff reports, and student placement. Columbus' Site Council Study occurred during the spring of 1992. The Multi-age Task Force worked during the fall and winter of 1992-1993. Parent meetings were held during the spring of 1993 and student placement activities during June of that year. Implementation of the program was the start of the 1993-1994 school year.

Columbus has two classes of kindergarten-first, two classes of second-third, one class of third-fourth-fifth, and two classes of fourth-fifth. There are three teams: Early Primary, Primary and Intermediate. Curriculum is on a two-year cycle with school-wide themes. Centers, blended instruction, portfolios, and individual student conferences are components of instruction and assessment.

Parents serve on committees, work in the classrooms, serve on the School Site Council and are on the Early Primary, Primary, and Intermediate teams involved in student placement decisions. Visitors are welcome at any time, but need to set up an appointment in advance.

Edwards Elementary
715 E 8th
Newberg, OR 97132-3407
(503) 538-8360
District: Newberg

Principal: Nancy Dorey
School Size:
550 students
34 teachers
2 principals

Program Implemented: 1992
Program Descriptors:

- DAP
- Thematic Units
- Reading Recovery
- Curriculum Integration
- Whole Language
- Literature-based Reading
- Hands-on Activities
- Portfolios & Profiles

During 1991 the Newberg School District strongly encouraged restructuring by offering grants to worthy programs. Edwards applied for one of the grants for the development of a mixed-age program. The school did not receive a grant, but made a commitment to establish a program to allow for developmentally appropriate practices, more time for the development of social skills, and a way to deal with a high mobility rate. In January of 1992, eight teachers and two administrators attended an early childhood conference.

Upon their return to school, they started to do research, visit other programs, and survey the staff as to their interest. Four teachers were identified and group planning was started. Two days during the school year and four days in the summer were for planning for each of the four teachers. There are four mixed-age classrooms. Each classroom has one teacher with twenty-five students in a self-contained classroom. There is an even number of first and second graders of mixed abilities supported by district-provided special services. Students stay with the same teacher for two years. Parent input is important in placement, so parents have the option of considering the single-age first and second grade classrooms.

Using district-adopted curricula, the school has blended first and second grade objectives and developed two-year cycle thematic units in science, social studies, health, and literature-based reading. The program also incorporates Reading Recovery assessment techniques, district curriculum-based measurements, profiles, portfolios, and individual teacher-made measurements. Hands-on experiences, developmentally appropriate activities, research projects, and a variety of student groupings are part of the program.

Parent education is an integral part of the program. A spring meeting is held for kindergarten parents so they have information to request a single-age or mixed-age placement. Mixed-age program information is received by parents in the fall also. Parents are welcome to play an active role in the learning process at home and in the classroom by volunteering, helping with homework and projects, and contributing toward thematic studies. Parent feedback is gathered through the annual spring survey.

Visitors need to contact the school office to find out about scheduling details. Faculty are available for inservice workshops and presentations for a fee on topics related to mixed-age grouping.

Grand Ronde Elementary
8720 Grand Ronde
Grand Ronde, OR 97347
(503) 879-5210
District: Willamina

Principal: Kathy Sumners
School Size:
140 students
10 teachers
1 principal

Program Implemented: 1993-94
Program Descriptors:

- Whole Language
- Thematic Instruction
- Portfolio Assessment
- Continuous Progress
- Parent Volunteers

Grand Ronde Elementary implemented a mixed-age program because the faculty felt it was the best way to meet the needs of students. The decision to have a mixed-age class was made in November, 1992 . Faculty attended numerous workshops and visited schools. Information packets were sent to parents in the spring, and three parent meetings were held to explain the new program. Parents requested class placements.

Whole language, thematic instruction, continuous progress in reading and math, portfolio assessment, interviews, and teacher-created "tests" are incorporated into the curriculum. Parent volunteers are welcome in the classes.

Visitors are welcome and need to call in advance.

Wascher Elementary
PO Box 788
Lafayette, OR 97127
(503) 864-3053
District: McMinnville

Principal: Kathy Cerwinske
School Size:
169 students
12 teachers
1 principal

Program Implemented: 1991

Program Descriptors:

- DAP
- Literature Based Reading
- Hands-on Science & Math
- Authentic Assessment
- Process Writing
- Cooperative Learning
- Integrated Curriculum
- Performance Based Assessment
- Portfolio Assessment
- Student-led Conferences
- Parent Volunteers

Wascher received a directive from their Superintendent and School Board to be the pilot building in the district to start a mixed-age program. At the same time, teachers were questioning past practices, becoming more skilled in developmentally appropriate practices, and open-minded to try mixed-age grouping. Teachers started by reading research in 1990, but didn't understand the mixed-age concept until they implemented it. Presentations were made to the School Board and parent groups. Teachers attended summer workshops on literature-based reading, hands-on science and math, and authentic assessment. The principal, new to the building the first year of the program, helped teachers with process writing and cooperative learning.

Mixed-age classrooms during the first year were very large, and consisted of two classes of kindergarten-first, two classes of second-third, and two classes of fourth-fifth. A second teacher was added during the second year, so the program included two classes of kindergarten-first, one class each of first-second, second-third, third-fourth, and two classes of fourth-fifth. Because of budget cuts during the third year, kindergarten and first were self-contained classes. Curriculum is integrated and literature-based, and includes process science. Assessment is performance-based and includes portfolios. Student-led conferences have been used for the last two years.

Wascher has a core of parent volunteers. Parent volunteers go on study trips.

Teachers and the principal are available to share their experiences with other schools. The principal has taught DAP, cooperative learning and process writing to teachers.

Visitors need to schedule an appointment in advance.

ADVICE TO SCHOOLS IMPLEMENTING MIXED-AGE PROGRAMS

The following comments reflect the Voices of Experience Across the State—Schools with Mixed-age Programs

- If at all possible, have a commitment from all teachers and do it school-wide. The teachers need to understand and support each other and be studying together as a staff. Have continual staff development in DAP, cooperative learning, inclusive special education and outcome-based education. You're never through learning.
- Get your foundation blocks in place to the point that the practices of Cooperative Learning, integrated curriculum, DAP, authentic assessment, etc., are working smoothly. Talk to parents about the good things going on so they trust you. Pay attention to readiness factors of staff and parents.
- Go slowly and communicate with parents on a continual basis. Teachers must do the planning and structure of the groupings to have total buy-in. We are a small school, therefore each class is multi-age except Kindergarten. A larger school would have the option of providing both traditional and multi-age classes.
- Start with general information inservices on the changes. Get teachers in who have experience. Let motivated teachers take workshops. Give parents lots of information and a choice (if the whole school isn't involved). Teachers need to understand the concept and classroom management with centers.
- Have a good knowledge base about what multi-age programs are and then create some situations to use it. Don't create a full program, but one for 3-4 weeks at a time to get a good sense of what it is. Don't wait until you have everything perfectly in place in the minds of everybody to initiate it. We found some of the things we thought looked good on paper didn't necessarily work like we thought they would. If you are going to embark on integrated thematic units as a part of the multi-age curriculum, you may want to make integrated thematic units the first step in the process, rather than doing it all at once.
- Evaluate your current program for developmentally appropriate practices, authentic assessment, integrated curriculum, cooperative learning strategies and a total school and classroom environment that is respectful, supportive and challenging. If these pieces are in place, transitioning to multi-age grouping is a natural process.
- Decide very early in the previous school year that you are going to implement a mixed-age classroom the next year. It gives the teachers ample time to reflect how they will adapt curriculum as they are going through it.
- Consensus building. Decide if DAP is the goal, then what structure supports that goal.
- Start the planning process early in the previous year. Be in close contact with parents. Give them a choice if at all possible—blended vs. traditional.
- Visit other sites that are using the model.
- Get interested teachers started who are willing to take risks. Work to obtain parent support from the beginning. It helps to have strong, well-established teachers as leaders.
- Allow the "study year" or the time needed to develop a school-wide philosophy. Include parents in the process.
- Spend time getting ready, visit and invite others, read research and work hard to inform parents. The last item is always a challenge. We could have done even more of it.

- Staff Development.
- Teachers involved in the multi-age program must be committed and willing to work hard. Parents must be part of the program in order to guarantee success.
- Keep everyone informed and make sure all staff members feel special for the contributions they make in educating children. Involve all staff in opportunities to explore and try new ideas, as well as a variety of ways to assist in making building-wide decisions. Progress at a slow and well-informed pace.
- Carefully study research and instructional practices. Involve parents in the study and decision making. Communicate often with parents. Know that we must be developmentally appropriate with teachers as well as parents. Each person is at a different place in his or her own educational growth.
- Don't go too fast and lose staff and community.
- Determine "why "with faculty, provide support for training, communicate with parents openly, provide options for placement based upon student need and placement options based upon parent need.
- Take time and study the literature and see colleagues for support.
- Combine as much of the curriculum as possible to teach the concepts—don't try to teach individual grades. You have to modify materials to meet needs of individuals. The biggest thing, I think, (especially when you get new teachers) is to encourage and help people adjust to the idea. It takes some time to get yourself organized, but it is fun.
- Get the support and enthusiasm of several key teacher leaders before beginning.
- Have staff wanting and willing to work in a mixed-age grouping. Give plenty of training. Make extra planning time available for staff.
- Study it well, bring parents into it early, phase it in.
- Go slowly. Do much preplanning. Make sure your staff is together on this and match teams to work together.
- Make a decision that you are going to do it. Make sure those involved have "ownership". Continue to communicate what you are doing and why you are doing it.
- To reap the full advantages, couple multi-age with teaming. Include some measure of self-selection in the formation of teams. Don't bite off too much too soon. Find a way to allow teachers plenty of planning time before implementation. Stick with it—you'll be glad you did!
- Research—Staff Development—Visit—and create a healthy organization before change.
- Plan, involve parents, have 100% from staff (even if they don't all agree), and think it over and over and over . . .
- Be sure teachers of multi-age grouping are philosophically committed to multi-age grouping and developmentally appropriate practices.
- It really helps if everyone does it together—teachers can support each other. We also feel that first having classes for two years helped teachers develop confidence and experience the advantages of working with children for more than one year.
- Educate your staff, community and parents on what exactly it means for their school to become a mixed-age school. Define DAP, OBE, Whole Language, hands-on, how the curricula will change (integrated), portfolios, homework, etc. And repeat the reasons on a trimester basis.

- Primary: Train the teachers, educate parents before implementing, support teachers in planning, materials, classroom organization, release time. Put in place slowly. We phased in the curriculum changes for six or seven years before changing class configurations.
  Upper: Let parents know ahead of time. Reach agreement within the staff. Continuing communication to parents. Keeping the same students for two years is a definite advantage.

- Involving the community in the planning process as well as the students and teachers is essential. Only teachers and administrators who truly believe in the benefits of a mixed-age program should be involved.

- Obtain staff training, do observations, and create time for planning. Include parents in your decision making process and inform them of what and why you're undertaking these changes. Be well-prepared to respond to their concerns.

- Put a flexible curriculum and a range of classroom materials in place first.

- Be informed—talk to others! Do not do it by yourself—colleague support is essential. Don't get too discouraged—it gets better with time!

- Do not rush the planning process—be very thorough with this stage. Involve staff members at the outset.

- Educate parents about the philosophy but don't ask for their opinion. We found our parents were reluctant of the change. Have a supportive principal.

- Don't force it. Let teachers do what they are ready to do and support them in their efforts.

- Teachers need to be able to work in teams and have planning time.

- Have the individuals who will be involved do research and development . Keep the public informed.

- The change at Mohawk was assisted in large part by three factors which might be beneficial to other schools. First, the staff shared ideas and visions and made a commitment to creating a multi-age program. Everyone in the staff was in agreement and supported the effort. Second, there was involvement and sharing with parents at an early stage. There was also continual involvement with parents throughout the planning process. Parents were given demonstrations and opportunities to ask questions. This process took more than one year. Third, the school was able to secure resources to allow staff and parents to visit multi-age schools, attend multi-age workshops and also provide release time for planning the curriculum and instructional strategies for the classes.

- Visit or talk with other teachers about best procedures and what works. Also, our experience/background with double grades has put us in good stead as far as classroom management is concerned.

- Curriculum can be flexible and multi-dimensional. The model will provide a wide range of activities with varying degrees of difficulty. This flexibility meets the needs of all students in the group, thereby minimizing failure and maximizing success. It may be possible to avoid labeling (LD, Chapter 1, etc.), which is widely regarded as harmful to the self-esteem of many children.

- Be sure you have the support of parents before beginning. Make sure they understand what you are doing and that teachers are well-read and enthusiastic.

- Study child development and constructivism first. Know what's good for children and what child-centered really means. It's not another way of being teacher-centered.

- Include parents and community in all preliminary staff training and school visitations possible. Bring the community awareness along with staff as plans are being made for change.

- Take your time in the change process. Train staff in open-ended teaching strategies, cooperative learning, whole language, writing, reading process, problem-solving and thinking skills. Be supportive with staff, not forceful. Allow people to be comfortable as they change.

- Give yourself time to develop a strong program by doing visitations, curriculum planning, workshops, classes and staff education. Work with a cooperative team to develop the program. Don't do it alone. Give staff members a choice—to be involved or not. Parents must be educated about the program, its philosophy and benefits. Be open to student, parent and staff needs. Start with a two-year program and a blended curriculum.

- Working as a team has been an important part of our program. Keep a focus on what's best for kids. Also, meet with teachers in other buildings to share ideas and encourage each other! A supportive principal is very helpful.

- Communication to all interested parties (bring all on board). Develop a team of experts on staff. (Visiting experts can't be there each time they are needed.) Time is a factor. We have defined the following times as essential for change and growth to take place and continue (all of these are separate).

  1. Prep time (daily).
  2. Team planning time (weekly).
  3. Inservice information (monthly).
  4. Staff development (becoming experts, attending classes, workshops, researching, practice, etc.)
  5. Curriculum development (at the very least, one day monthly).

- Move slowly. Don't force the change on teachers or parents. Administrators must allow us flexibility in curriculum and planning.

- Analyze why you're choosing mixed-age grouping, educate teachers and parents, and go slowly.

- Sell it to parents. Ask for volunteers (teachers and parents), and make it desirable. Use research to support idea.

- Do your own thing—don't copy, and don't do it without study and discussion.

- Expect resistance. People don't change quickly, especially regarding something as basic as their child's education. It helps to talk about the process of change, using comparisons that parents have seen since they were in school (computers, space, drugs, gangs, the Cold War, etc.) and compare to changes in school (not too many).

- Involve parents right away in discussions and make sure you have a committed staff. They will be the ones doing most of the work!

- You need to sell parents on the idea, but the reluctance of many parents will not be overcome until you have taken the plunge into mixed-age grouping. Beginning with primary students will also make the first year or so easier. Our experience with trying to begin with intermediate students created greater resistance.

- Involve parents early in the planning process; be ready for opposition to change; only move forward with multi-age grouping if teachers implementing are behind it.

- Study child development, curriculum, instruction—then select an organization that facilitates that program.

- Let the local community make the decision as to what they want.

- Focus on the overall school program with mixed-age grouping being one component.

- Slow!
- Not all teachers (or students) have the personalities or learning-teaching traits required, and those differences deserve respect.
- Involve parents from the beginning.
- Stick with your beliefs. Seek support and help from other schools that have "been there" a while longer.
- I think all our staff would say you need time together to plan and that you should encourage only those who truly "buy in" to be part of mixed-age classes. We begin each fall with an all-staff retreat for two days at the beach. This bonding cements relationships that help keep us going all year.
- Go slowly. Read, study, develop questions and plan together.
- Provide enough planning time throughout the year.
- Teachers need training on mixed-age grouping, resources need to be available, parent volunteers, students need to have individualized programs.
- Make sure the school board completely understands the program.
- Go slowly. Investigate and read the research, and visit sites that are using mixed-age groupings . . . then go back and read. Mixed-age programs are not for every teacher and every child. Make the changes everyone feels comfortable with. There should be a choice for teachers, parents, and students.
- Get extensive inservice. Don't get discouraged. Hold a parent orientation-information meeting, COMMUNICATE with each other, parents, and experienced schools.
- We have a few staff who find restructuring difficult and are stressed by change. Overall our staff is supportive of our mixed-age classrooms. They have gained credibility and support as staff, and parents see the results. Inviting people in to see your program helps.
- Observe classes first. Talk a lot about it. Build commitment within the staff.
- Don't start without excited, trained teachers. Make sure the public knows what you're up to and are supportive.
- Take it slowly and expect you'll work harder than ever.
- Sell your parents. Empower them to be your best promoters! They love to see what's best for their child, and a mixed-age experience provides that!
- Don't rush. Move slowly. If you have a vision/philosophy your school believes in, try to ensure that your mixed-age program fits within that framework. This way, there will be less of a chance of polarization of staff and the community.
- Visit other programs first. Do research prior to embarking on this venture. Keep parents informed from the beginning. Know why you're doing it. Believe in it, or don't do it. Don't call a split grade class a mixed-age class. Allow teachers time for learning, sharing, talking, planning together.
- Allow folks free choice. Not all teachers want to do this, nor do all parents support it. Options help people feel good about their assignment/placement while observing the success of good mixed-age environments.
- Just do it!

TEACHER RESOURCE
GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND BEST PRACTICES:
What to look for in a developmentally appropriate classroom

Adapted from Piaget, Vygotsky, Erikson and the NAEYC
Reaching Potentials Through Appropriate Curriculum and Assessment

Principle: Students learn best when their physical needs are met and they feel psychologically safe and secure.

Principle: Students construct knowledge.

Principle: Students learn through social interaction with adults and other students.

Principle: Students' learning reflects a recurring cycle of awareness, exploration, inquiry and utilization.

Principle: Students learn through play practice.

Principle: Students' interest and "need to know" motivate learning.

Principle: Human development and learning are characterized by individual variation.

Principle: Assessment practices reflect developmental principles, are integrated and utilized to benefit each student.

SUMMARY OF GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND BEST PRACTICES:
What to look for in a developmentally appropriate classroom.

Curriculum
- ☐ Life experiences
- ☐ Language rich
- ☐ Reading and writing taught simultaneously
- ☐ Integrated—skills in context
- ☐ Hands-on
- ☐ Play is respected as learning

Schedule
- ☐ Large time blocks
- ☐ Smooth transitions
- ☐ Balance—teacher directed/ student-initiated
- ☐ Active—quiet time
- ☐ Independent and guided time
- ☐ Large, small group and individual activities

Teaching Strategies
- ☐ Individual needs addressed
- ☐ Developmentally appropriate
- ☐ Interactive
- ☐ Positive
- ☐ Grouping patterns foster self-esteem and social/emotional growth
- ☐ Teacher accepts student where she/he is

Materials
- ☐ Real—concrete and manipulation
- ☐ Choices for hands-on activities
- ☐ Open-ended and lend themselves to a variety of activities, i.e., blocks, science materials, paint, clay, etc.
- ☐ Age and size appropriate
- ☐ Safe/durable
- ☐ Readily accessible by the students
- ☐ Adaptable for <u>all</u> students

Environment
- ☐ Students can move about
- ☐ Learning centers—allow choice recognizing individual differences
- ☐ Print rich—labeled library area, writing area
- ☐ Arranged for flexible grouping
- ☐ Safe, comfortable, student-centered
- ☐ Students' work displayed at their eye level
- ☐ Physically, aesthetically attractive
- ☐ Rest area—a "cozy spot" available
- ☐ Teacher is a facilitator—not director

DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE PRACTICES
THE CONTINUUM

Environment

Increasing student-centeredness, learner independence, problem solving

Desks for individual use—in rows—U-shaped. Social interaction minimized	Desks are clustered, learning centers are around room perimeter	Room arranged in learning centers, with teacher selected tasks, shared furniture	Teacher/students arrange and organize environment to facilitate interaction and student initiated activities
Teacher's desk focal point	Teacher's desk less conspicuous	Teacher's desk gives way to flexible area used for student conferencing, parent conferencing, record keeping. Area may have file cabinet, comfy chair, shelves, professional materials	
Room never changes; Teacher assigned seats	Room changed by teacher periodically	Students/teacher plan room changes collaboratively	Room reflects the diverse developmental needs of students
Room is prepared with commercial or teacher made displays	Teacher has some bulletin boards prepared—reserves room for students' work	Students' work displayed by teacher	Students plan use of space and displays. Displays are at students' eye level
Basal texts, paper pencil tasks are predominant. Teacher controls distribution.	Concrete materials/ manipulatives available—teacher controls distribution	Concrete materials used as needed, students ask to use for problem solving	Students use concrete materials to assist in problem solving and to create problem for solving

THE CONTINUUM

Instructional Strategies
Increasing integration, decision making—use of language

Curriculum and activities teacher-directed and planned	Teacher plans considering students' interests	Students/teacher have collaborative input in plan (webbing is evident)	Students select areas of interest recognizing and using skills they need to acquire
Skill-based, time specified for each content area	Units from basal or curriculum guides	Goal-based themes; interdisciplinary approach	Integrated—interest driven skills addressed as needed. Large time blocks for inquiry and exploration
Begin with teaching parts (discrete skills)—build toward whole (concept)	Begin with whole concept; break into discrete parts as skills are needed	Connection to students' interests and needs	
Predominately basals, paper, pencil, workbooks; Library books read at specific time or when work is finished	Whole language approach is used; Library—trade books used to supplement basal text	Individualized or small group instruction—use of student's own language to build skills. Reading/writing instruction based on students' literature and students' own experiences	
Students work by themselves	Interaction only at specified times	Interaction, cooperative problem solving encouraged	
Competition and extrinsic rewards used to motivate	Teacher minimizes competition—builds skills for cooperation	Improving oneself is focus; Rewards become intrinsic. Learning is its own reward; Cooperative learning/peer tutoring encouraged	

THE CONTINUUM

Teacher Role

Corrector—errors are not acceptable—they reduce grades	Errors are important to learning process	Errors are reviewed and used to guide new learning	Students evaluate/correct own and peers' work
Imparter of knowledge	Facilitator of the learning process		
Lesson plans are prepared days in advance—teacher follows closely, based on basal texts	Lesson plans reflect goals and objectives with flexibility to meet student needs	Evidence of planning that reflects long term goals and webbing of ideas generated by the students and collaboration among teaching teams	

Class Management

Class controlled and monitored by teacher's class rules—consequences	Students begin to assume responsibility for own behavior and have input	Students establish class rules and practice self-discipline, they help each other determine consequences
Conflicts are resolved by teacher	Conflict resolution skills are learned and practiced by the students	
No choices provided. Everyone does the same thing at the same time	Few choices—usually when required work is complete	Many choices—students choose centers and activities and design work day

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School	County
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Athena Elementary	Umatilla
Bangor Elementary	Coos
Bellfountain Elementary	Benton
Blodgett Elementary	Benton
Blossom Gulch Elementary	Coos
Boeckman Creek Primary	Clackamas
Boise-Eliot Elementary	Multnomah
Brothers Elementary	Deschutes
Buckingham Elementary	Deschutes
Camp Creek Elementary	Lane
Capitol Hill Elementary	Multnomah
Cedaroak Park Primary	Clackamas
Clark Elementary	Multnomah
Clinton Kelly Elementary	Multnomah
Columbus Elementary	Yamhill County
Corridor Alternative	Lane
Cottrell Elementary	Clackamas
Delake Elementary	Lincoln
Eastwood Elementary	Douglas
Edwards Elementary	Yamhill
Elmira Elementary	Lane
Eugene Field School	Marion
Ferndale Elementary	Umatilla
Firwood Elementary	Clackamas
Forest Hills Elementary	Clackamas
Garfield Elementary	Benton
Gilchrist Elementary	Klamath
Glenn D. Hale Elementary	Jackson
Glide Elementary	Douglas
Grande Ronde Child Center	Union
Grand Ronde Elementary	Yamhill
Greenway Elementary	Washington
Groner Elementary	Washington
Harris School	Linn
Helix Elementary	Umatilla
Hillcrest Elementary	Coos
Hollydale Elementary	Multnomah
Hollyrood Elementary	Multnomah
Hoover Elementary	Jackson
Howard Elementary	Lane
Jewett Elementary	Jackson
Jordan Valley Elementary	Malheur
Joseph G. Wilson Elementary	Wasco
Keno Elementary	Klamath
Latham Elementary	Lane
Lenox Elementary	Washington
Lent Elementary	Multnomah
Lewis & Clark Elementary	Clatsop
Lincoln Elementary (Ashland)	Jackson
Lincoln Elementary (Corvallis)	Benton

Lincoln Elementary (Vernonia)	Columbia
Lincoln Park Elementary	Multnomah
London Elementary	Lane
Lynch View Elementary	Multnomah
Menlo Park Elementary	Multnomah
Merlin Primary	Josephine
Mist Elementary	Columbia
Mohawk Elementary	Lane
Monmouth Elementary	Polk
Morningside Elementary	Marion
Mosier Elementary	Wasco
Mt. Pleasant Elementary	Clackamas
Myrtle Creek Elementary	Douglas
Oak Grove School	Polk
Oak Heights Elementary	Linn
Paisley Elementary	Lake
Pelican Elementary	Klamath
Perrydale Elementary	Polk
Powers Elementary	Coos
Pratum Elementary	Marion
Quincy-Mayger Elementary	Columbia
Rock Creek Elementary	Washington
Rose City Park Elementary	Multnomah
Schirle Elementary	Marion
Stayton Elementary	Marion
Sumpter Elementary	Marion
Tennessee Elementary	Linn
Territorial Elementary	Lane
Ukiah Elementary	Umatilla
Uplands Elementary	Clackamas
Veneta Elementary	Lane
View Acres Elementary	Clackamas
Wascher Elementary	Yamhill
Washington Grade	Columbia
Waterloo Primary	Linn
Willamette Primary	Clackamas
Williams Elementary	Josephine
Wilson Elementary	Benton
Wolf Creek Elementary	Josephine
Woodstock Elementary	Multnomah
Wright Elementary	Marion
Yoncalla Elementary	Douglas

Oregon Department of Education and Ackerman Laboratory School

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